



ICELANDERS TAKE ON AMERICA

FROM THE VIKINGS TO WAR BRIDES AND BEYOND

GLÍMA:

*The Civilised Way to
Throw a Man to the Floor*

BEATEN BISHOP:

*Börkur Gets Beat Up
and Makes a Great Film*

**"MY NAME IS THOR
And I'm an Alcoholic"**

AL-JAZEERA GOES ENGLISH

Their Editor Explains Why

the REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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The Reykjavík Grapevine crew

The Reykjavík Grapevine
Hafnarstræti 15, 2nd floor
www.grapevine.is
grapevine@grapevine.is
Editors: 561-2323 / 845-2152 / editor@grapevine.is
Advertising: 562-1213 / 869-7796 / ads@grapevine.is
Distribution: 562-1213 / 898-9249 / dist@grapevine.is
Production: 561-2329 / 849-5611 / production@grapevine.is
Listings: 562-1213 / 869-7796 / listings@grapevine.is
Subscription: 561-2329 / 849-5611 / subscribe@grapevine.is

Publisher: Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson / publisher@grapevine.is
Editor: Valur Gunnarsson / editor@grapevine.is
Staff Journalist: Paul Fontaine-Nikolov
Listings editor: Jón Trausti Sigurðarson / listings@grapevine.is
Production manager: Oddur Óskar Kjartansson / production@grapevine.is
Creative director: Hörður Kristbjörnsson / design@grapevine.is
Photographers: Hörður Sveinsson / photo@grapevine.is
Guðmundur Freyr Vigfússon / gfreyr@gi.is
Proofreader: Ingunn Snædal
Advertising directors: Hilmar Steinn & Jón Trausti
Distribution: Jóhann Páll Hreinsson

Cover photo by: Gúndi
On cover: Stefán Geirsson
Thanks to: Iceland's Gíma Association and Hörður Gunnarsson

Printed by: Ísafoldarprentsmiðja ehf.
of copies: 35.101

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LETTERS

Complaints, criticism, suggestions, praise, money in new, unmarked bills, anything at all: Contact letters@grapevine.is or send your mail to: The Reykjavik Grapevine, Hafnarstræti 15, 101 Reykjavik

Dear Sir

This may seem a rather random e-mail, but I found in an internet search a piece of work done on Icelandic sheep herding by Kirstin Egekvist.

I used to have a penfriend called Kirstin Steffansdottir Egekvist four years ago. At that time she lived in Denmark. I live in England and we met through the Guide and Scout Association.

I was hoping that you could pass this e-mail on to her as I am hoping that we could resume our friendship. If she would like the same, please ask her to either write to my parents address (I hope that she still has it somewhere) or ask her to e-mail me at this address.

If you are able to help, please do, as I have been trying to find her for a year.

Many thanks, in advance
Nicola (Seabrook)

PS. And could you tell her that her English is fantastic!

Grapevine. Here to bring people together.

Hello everybody,
Up with the teachers strike - content teachers' demands!
Protect the fundamentals of social prosperity!
Panagiotis Liberopoulos
TK19003 Markopoulo Mesogaia,
Greece

Thank you Panagiotis. Anyone else. Anyone?

Fine, be that way. Let's see if anyone has anything nice to say about us on the internet. The Guardian has a piece called "Hello darkness, my old friend..."

They claim that in Iceland: "black winter is celebrated as a season of love, beer and obsessions" "We love winter," says a mad doctor named Thorarian Sveinsson, before adding: "Those who cannot live with it will die." "A friend of mine did a 5,000-piece jigsaw puzzle," suggests a William Thomas, window-cleaner. "My friend put the puzzle together and then he painted it white with a red dot in the middle. People thought he had made it like that. 'How did you do it?' they asked." Well, William, you've got to keep yourself occupied somehow.

He then quotes a Mr. Gunnarsson making the obligatory Viking reference: "In late summer, early autumn, desperation sets in. You feel like you have to find someone to snuggle up to for the winter. It goes back to Viking days when there were always two to a bed to keep each other warm." He then moves onto a young girl: "This is the first winter I haven't had a boyfriend for several years," said Andrea Palmadottir, 19, looking doleful. She believes the dark of winter is much more romantic."

Miss Palmadottir, please send your contact details and a picture to: editor@grapevine.is

AMERICAN OF THE MONTH: The Reverend Al Sharpton

Preaching at the age of four, ordained a minister at the astonishing age of ten, and working for Rev. Jesse Jackson by the age of fifteen, Alfred C. "Al" Sharpton started his populist undertakings before most Americans even began to think about politics. Yet even with his active involvement in civil rights, Sharpton still found the time to be James Brown's touring manager from 1973 until the early 80s. Upon leaving the Godfather of Soul, he stepped up his activism, especially in his hometown of New York. There, he brought attention to crimes such as the Howard Beach incident, where a group of whites chased African-American Michael Griffiths onto a highway where he was struck and killed by a car. His advocacy brought attention to the shocking state of racial relations in what was supposed to be the most cosmopolitan city in the world. In 1987 he led a protest march which effectively shut down the Brooklyn Bridge, an act which landed him in jail for 45 days.



"Fighting For Fundamental Human Rights" reveals some of the major points of his platform:

Increase voter registration.
Fight to ensure women's rights are not stolen from them by the Republican Right.
Deliver universal health care for the nation, not hidden benefits to the health care industry.
Raise issues that would otherwise be overlooked—for example, affirmative action and anti-death penalty policy.

Help working people by giving them the biggest tax cuts - not the rich.
Strengthen our REAL national security by fighting for human rights, the rule of law, and economic justice at home and abroad.

Clearly unelectable ideas. Still, John Kerry adopted Sharpton's "Urban Agenda," which embraces Affirmative Action, and cracks down on police brutality, improves schools in minority districts, increases minority access to health care, and bolsters programs to create jobs for minorities.

We applaud Sharpton for not only believing that the people are the government, but for acting on this belief and, most importantly, encouraging others to do the same. Sometimes controversial but always genuine and populist in the truest sense of the word, the Reverend Al Sharpton is Grapevine's American of the Month.

You can visit Sharpton's website at www.sharpton2004.org

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see more at www.wulffmorgenthaler.com

by Valur Gunnarsson

WHERE DID IT ALL GO WRONG?

Around the breakfast table, people were close to tears. Bill and Sherry were in Iceland on holiday from working for the organisation Mary's House, which helps immigrants settle in the US. It was the morning of November the third, and they were still watching the election results come in. The unthinkable had happened. To their credit, the American people had never voted for Bush before. Now, he had won, in what seems like a fair and square election, with a margin of three million.

Where did it all go wrong? How did it come to this? The United States seemed like such a good idea at the time. At the end of WW2, they were hailed as liberators the world over. Marshall Aid was extended to Europe, to stop the spread of communism, yes, but it is remains one of the most generous things one nation has done for others. On most of the rest of the globe, even in the Arab world, they were seen as at least a preferable choice to the old imperialist powers of Britain and France. When the US reined in the Europeans in the Suez crisis, these hopes seemed to be justified. Now, in most parts of the Arab world, Chirac is the most popular Westerner, and Americans are shot on sight. Where did it all go wrong?

When Kennedy was elected president, the United States finally seemed to be about to fulfil its great promise. Even after his assassination, it still seemed that a truly Great Society might materialise under Johnson. The United States at this point had perhaps larger reserves of wealth than any nation in history. Johnson looked determined to allow all of society to share in it, from advancing civil rights to fighting poverty to reforming the school system. And yet, somehow, he was dragged into the quagmire of Vietnam, all the money earmarked for social programs instead used instead to bomb rice fields in Southeast Asia. The opportunity for sweeping social reform would not present itself again.

In the 70's, the United States went through a period of self doubt, reflected in its music and films. The new world power had made its first serious blunder, and a time of introspection



and reflection followed. For a while, it seemed as if America was determined to learn from its mistakes. Until, that is, in 1980, a Hollywood actor was elected President and bolstered people's confidence by ignoring the lessons. The United States set out on the road to Iraq. Where did it all go wrong?

In 1991, when I first went to Saudi Arabia in the immediate aftermath of the first Gulf War, people mistook me for an American and hailed me as liberator. At the time, Saddam Hussein was

perceived as a threat to the region and the people of Saudi Arabia were glad to have American help. But conquering armies have a habit of staying in the countries they liberate. A new generation of Saudi's grew up seeing an army of infidels in the holy land, which ten years later led to 9/11. The people I knew in the compound no longer dare leave it for fear of their lives. So much for the liberators.

As I watched the elections with my American friends Bart Paul, Ed, Ray and Harris, it struck me that these are some of the best people I've met here, or in any country. Why so many of their countrymen decided to vote for war they did not understand any more than I did. The current inhabitants of the United States may not have visited the same condemnation upon themselves as a generation of Germans did in 1933 when they allowed Hitler to come to power. But this is certainly the worst government to be voted into office in a democracy in the post war era. Even the very term postwar has lost its meaning.

Not only are the republicans still in control of the White House, they also control both houses of Congress and the Supreme Court. Rather than being reprimanded for his policies by the people, Bush is getting more support than ever. This does not bode well for the inhabitants of Iran, or for the rest of the world.

It may be true that Americans get the presidents they deserve. But the rest of us get the presidents they deserve as well. And we deserve better than this.

CO-EDITORIAL

by Robert Jackson

101

It's a shop, a hotel, a bar, a book, a postcode, a mindset, a wasteland and a warzone. It's the epicentre of cool. It's the seed-bed of ambition and the end of the road. It's a crucible of talent for multi-tasking would be's and a safe haven for the lacklustre might have beens. It's a place where jaw dropping beauty mingles with oafish sullenness. It's the fresh draught of air that blows down Laugavegur on a champagne summer's dawn and it's the blood and puke on Hafnastræti at throwing out time. It's 101 R and it's R 101 – It's 101 Reykjavik and it's Room 101. It's everything a man can aspire to and it's his living nightmare.

It's the magnesium flare of his inspiration and the sulphorous rench of his despair. It's his shelter from the storm and his blasted heath. And, looking down on it all is Esja, her moods as many as there are days. She sees it all, but keeps her secrets close. When 101 Reykjavik has become your Room 101, go to her. Climb her as high as your lungs and legs will permit. Perch on her splintered rock and look back on this gypsy encampment of a city. See it for what it really is – a mongrel bitch of a place that responds to the steel toe-cap better than the kind word. Draw strength from her indifference. See the globe

bend away from this speck of a place. Sit until your flesh freezes and your teeth chatter, and you hunger for food and thirst for water and long for company. Then you'll be ready for 101.

"Family commitments in England have meant that I can not devote as much time as I would like to the paper. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as co-editor and contributor this summer and wish the paper all the best for the future."
-Robert Jackson

News in brief

Presidential Couple Visits New York



Icelandic president Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson and his wife Dorrit Moussaieff paid a visit to New York to take part in the festivities of the American-Scandinavian Foundation. For more on Icelanders in the US, see feature.

Scandinavians latest suspected terrorists



The US State Department recently issued a statement advising Americans living in Nordic and Baltic countries to be "especially careful" of being attacked by terrorists before or during the US presidential elections, especially in public places like train stations and airports. The statement was issued on the US embassy's website in Finland and Lithuania.

Oddsson to Meet Colin Powell



Foreign Minister Davíð Oddsson returns from an extended medical leave and will soon meet with Colin Powell. It is assumed by many that the two will discuss the future of the US armed forces base in Keflavik, which may result in Powell being forced to stay in Iceland indefinitely.

Don't compromise
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★★★★★
"...the meals were simply the best I have enjoyed in an Icelandic restaurant this year."

Food and wine critic –
Morgunblaðið Daily Newspaper
September 7th 2003

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GIVING THE WHOLE STORY

by Paul F Nikolov

The editor of Al-Jazeera is getting ready to broadcast in English

A US military spokesman announces at a press conference that soldiers will be issued a deck of cards featuring the names and faces of 55 members of Saddam Hussein's regime who are to be sought and captured. When the media asks to see the deck – to see the living targets that the military is seeking – they are denied access. Al-Jazeera is here in the same boat as CNN or BBC but, in another sense, the deck has always been stacked against Al-Jazeera.

The scene described is from Jehane Noujaim's documentary Control Room, about the political problems Qatari news network Al-Jazeera faced covering the war in Iraq. One is left with the overall impression that contrary to the network's image as an Al-Qaida propaganda machine, Al-Jazeera might have in fact been more unbiased than some of the other news networks reporting on the event. That is, if Al-Jazeera had been allowed to stay in Iraq.

Good journalism means being disliked by both parties

From its very inception, Al-Jazeera has managed to draw the criticism of both Western and Arabic governments. US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has called their images of Iraqi civilians "lies and propaganda" and their airing of videos of American POWs a violation of the Geneva Convention. Conversely, former Iraqi Minister of Information Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf called on Al-Jazeera to "stop their pro-American propaganda." If one of the hallmarks of good

journalism is being disliked by both sides, Al-Jazeera certainly fits the bill.

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"I don't think they actually want a free media in Iraq"

Ahmed al-Shaikh, editor-in-chief of Al-Jazeera, October 28, 2004

Jazeera staff, while critical of the policies of the Bush administration, express nothing but respect for America itself. Correspondent Hassan Ibrahim, a former classmate of Osama bin Laden and an ardent Arab nationalist, states that he believes that "America will stop America," that he has absolute faith in the US constitution and American democracy to turn the situation around. Senior producer Samir Khader wants to send his children to university in the US and says, "we [Al-Jazeera] don't want to alienate

Baghdad, as no hotel wanted to increase their risk of becoming a target for an air strike. While Al-Jazeera did return to Baghdad later in the year, in August 2004 the US sponsored Iraqi interim government summarily banned Al-Jazeera from being anywhere in Iraq.

Why was Al-Jazeera singled out by US authorities? And why are their perceptions considered to be so different from the Western media? Typing "Iraqi civilian toll" into any major search engine will show an

exact number provided by some media sources (whose numbers vary), while others contend that there is no exact number at all. The natural reaction of many people is to trust those media sources that are a part of their own culture – people who will report on an event from a point of view as "one of their own."

process. Whatever the truth behind the attacks may be, the end result was that Al-Jazeera correspondents became unwelcome guests in

Recently, Lt. Col. Daniel Williams of the US coalition forces was quoted as saying, "Al-Jazeera is a welcome guest and professional news organisation," a statement that al-Shaikh says contradicts the way the coalition forces have treated Al-Jazeera. "I don't think they actually want a free media in Iraq," he explains, "It's been really hard for us trying to bring our viewers news about the war in Iraq when we're not allowed in the country. We have to get all our information from the outside, so of course we're missing a lot."

When asked what Al-Jazeera is doing to try to reach a non-Muslim, non-Arabic western audience, al-Shaikh says that they will be launching an English-language television channel "hopefully early next year."

"I think what will set us apart from other news stations reporting on the same events in the area is that, first of all, we will be bringing to the western world the words of the Arabic people who don't speak English and, second of all, we will include explanations of the Arabic Muslim lifestyle and religion within our news stories. This isn't just going to be an English-language version of our Arabic channel – we want to present to westerners the Arabic perspective of events in the area in a way that they can relate to."

Are competing media sources simply playing a game of opposites with each other? If both claim to be fair and unbiased, why do their perceptions of the same events sometimes completely contradict each other?

"Al-Jazeera's mission is not to reflexively report on "the other side" of a story. Our goal from the very beginning has been simply to give our viewers the whole story."

Knowing the whole story obliges the viewer to use a blend of logic and intuition and listen to several different media sources. This necessitates involvement on behalf of the public. Fortunately, thanks to media sources that challenge those who would restrict our access to information, being left in the dark doesn't have to be the only option.

"Our goal from the very beginning was simply to give viewers the whole story"

In an exclusive interview with Grapevine, Ahmed al-Shaikh, editor-in-chief of Al-Jazeera, says:

"When Al-Jazeera first started, we came under a lot of criticism from Arab governments because we were one of a kind. We were reporting events the way they were actually happening, instead of just repeating the official version."

News in brief

Debtor's Prison: No Longer a Thing of the Past!



A man was sentenced to pay 200,000 krónur for cheating on his taxes. If he doesn't pay this fine within four weeks, the fine will be commuted to a 26 day jail sentence. The actual offense committed was that he filed as an independent businessman when, in fact, he was not. His actual line of work was not disclosed. Herbalife salesmen, consider yourselves warned.

Price-Fixing Not Fun Anymore



The Office of Competition has meted out their fines to the Big Four oil companies who have recently been caught in a price-fixing scam that spanned at least nine years. Bensinorka will have to pay 40 million krónur; Óliufélagið, 605 million; Ólis, 880 million and Shell, a whopping 1100 million. That should keep them occupied until noon tomorrow.

Grímsvötn Blows Again

Volcanic activity was recorded near



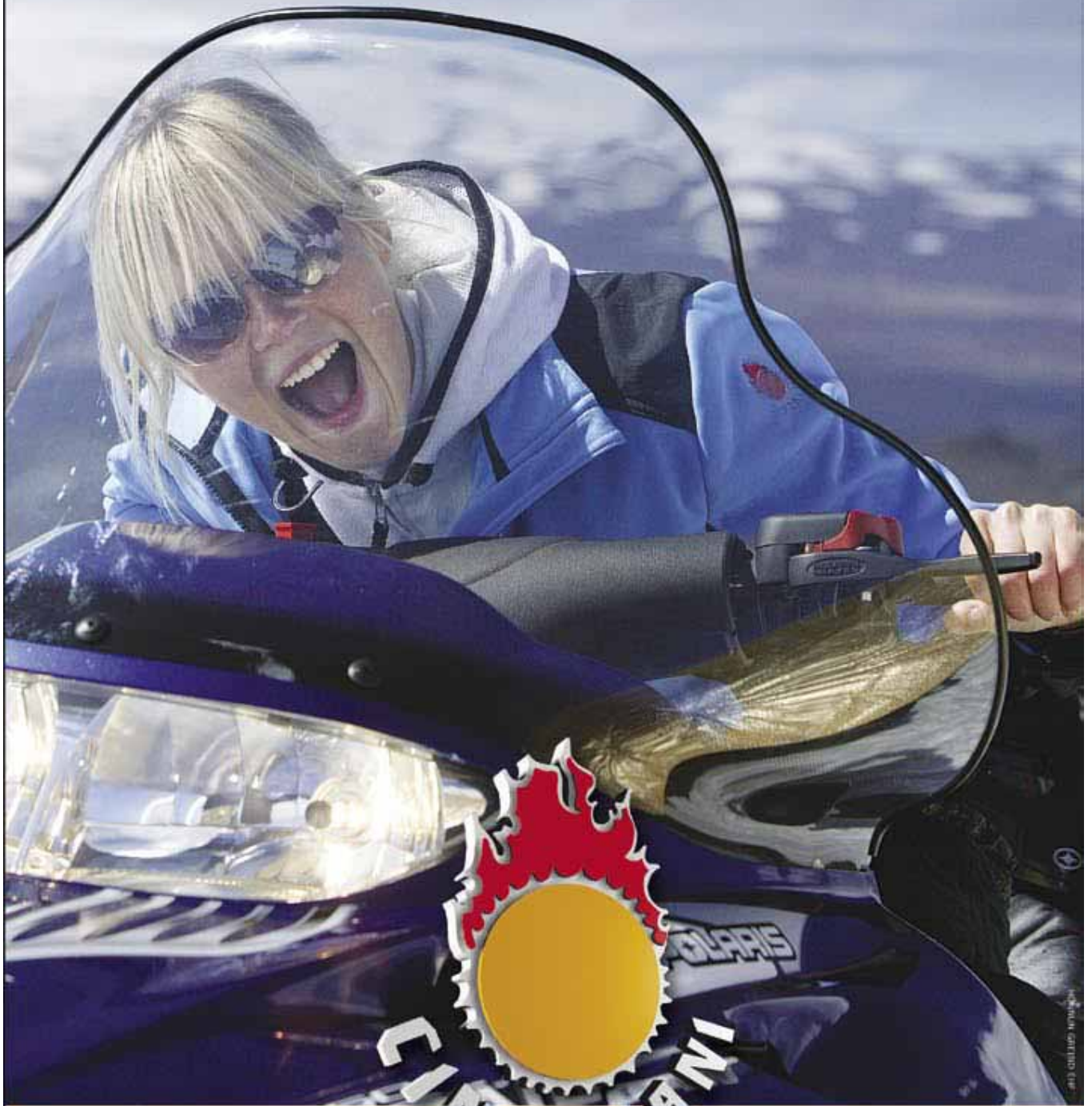
the area of the Grímsvötn glacial lakes, according to seismographers. The last eruption occurred in 1998 with much smoke and steam from melting glacial ice. This year's eruption comes from two separate fissures and resulted in a plume which stretched 8 km into the air, temporarily shutting down the roads.

Armed Firemen Attacked

In the ongoing effort to convince the country that men who wear military uniforms, carry military firearms and organize themselves under military rank are not soldiers, Prime Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson denied NATO reports that three Icelandic soldiers were wounded in a suicide bomb attack in Kabul, asserting instead that they were "civilians." One of the civilians was recently quoted by Morgunblaðið as saying that he didn't know if or at who he should start shooting.

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MAKING HISTORY:

Is the new government in Spain as good as it looks?

by John Boyce



It seems like everywhere you look these days you see that smile, hobnobbing with Europe's political elite, chatting short-sleeved to the man in the street, mending fences in America. It surfaced yet again last month on the cover of Time magazine looking pretty pleased with itself and well it might. It belongs to Juan Rodriguez Zapatero, new president of Spain whose career thus far has been as close as one gets in politics to an overnight success. As strange as the comparison may be for two so internationally at odds, it seems that Zapatero could well become the bold, reforming prime minister that Tony Blair was supposed to be.

Acting on an election promise to further equality, Zapatero began by breaking the European political mould by appointing 50% of his cabinet portfolios to women. In a recent interview with El Pais, Zapatero cited his mother's frustration at being unable to pursue her dream of studying medicine as igniting his feminist beliefs. Zapatero and his P.S.O.E. cohorts have also jumped into the gay marriage debate with both feet,

and new legislation will see Spain become as progressive as Denmark and Holland on the issue. And the reforming zeal doesn't stop there. Divorce is the latest institution to get a P.S.O.E. makeover. The government has just brought forward new legislation to allow "the Spanish to divorce in ten days" as the right wing daily El Mundo put it. The new law aims to speed up uncontested divorce cases and introduces new shared custody

guidelines. Abortion law, fairly strict by European standards, is also slated for reform in the new year and will probably lead to an easing of restrictions.

After the honeymoon

In Spain, regional politics is a serious business with powerful regions like Catalonia, the economic powerhouse of the whole peninsula, pressing for ever more autonomy. Secession apart, the government has again committed itself to wide-ranging reform of regional autonomy. Catalonia's relationship with the E.U. is currently under review and the P.S.O.E. have agreed to Catalonia's demand for independent representation in the E.U.

Notwithstanding Yes Minister's Sir Humphrey and his caustic remark that all new prime ministers more or less grind to a halt after a few months anyway, Zapatero has wisely used his honeymoon period and a

chastened opposition to kickstart a reform drive before the inevitable conservative reaction. While Tony Blair had that rare Labour leader luck to inherit an economy in good shape that performed obligingly well throughout his first term, Zapatero may not be so lucky. Thus far his prayers at the altar of economic indicators have not been answered and his adversaries have been quick to jump on rising unemployment, poor growth, declining investment and Zapatero's inexperience repeatedly criticising his "complete lack of an overall economic plan." Commentators have also begun to weigh in with doubts, one remarking recently that it will take more than that smile and regional pacts to run the Spanish economy.

A shrewd centrist

But behind the smile and the ardent social reform beats the heart of a shrewd economic centrist and there are signs that, a la Blair, Zapatero will try to beat them at their own game. Since taking office there has been frantic behind-the-scenes work to complete trade and investment agreements initiated by the previous administration particularly with the US, where Aznar picked up a congressional medal for promoting US-Spanish investment. Seen just last month polishing his anti-war rhetoric on a state visit to Tunisia, there is little doubt that it is Zapatero's international policy-making that has often grabbed the headlines. But with a myriad of reforms already implemented, a radical overhaul of higher education, Red Ken style congestion charges and new immigrant policy pencilled in for autumn, the real substance of his first six months lies in his domestic agenda and on that score at least, he may yet prove the exception to Sir Humphrey's golden rule.

Getting Warmer, Post-Colonial Style

Local knowledge of Inuits, Saami, Nenets, Evenki, Aleut, Gwitch'in and many other indigenous groups has provided alarming findings that confirm climate change.

In general temperatures are warmer and the weather is now unpredictable; the sea ice is thinner and freezes later in the fall and melts earlier in the spring and winter rains create thick layers of ice on the tundra.

Species that form the basis of indigenous lifestyles - whales, seals, reindeer, and many birds - are under increasing threat from climate change. Impacts include melting permafrost in Arctic Canada reported by Inuit hunters, severe extreme weather events in the Russian North, loss of winter ice in hunting territories in Unalakleet, Alaska, ice rain that freezes the ground in the Sámi's homelands, arrival of new species to the North and warming of the previous cold ocean waters.

"The Sámi have an ecological knowledge of their own, rooted in the traditional way of life. They have their own knowledge derived from

by Tero Mustonen



experience, long-term observation, and the utilization of natural resources. This knowledge is best expressed and transmitted through the Sámi language," says Sámi researcher Elina Helander. Local impacts have economic, cultural and social ramifications. Indigenous knowledge can offer important insights into climate data. These climate change observations build on countless generations, since time immemorial. This November,

Reykjavik will witness scientists, together with policymakers, and representatives of the indigenous organisations launch the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment; ACIA. ACIA is the most significant assessment of changing climate in the North. The Kyoto Protocol is the policy tool to limit greenhouse gasses. The USA pulled out of Kyoto in 2001 and in fact delayed the release of the ACIA until after the elections. The launch of ACIA

is a historic event in the Arctic. Not only does it confirm findings of the international studies on global warming, but it is the first report of its kind to recognize "Indigenous observations of climate change". This means that local knowledge of circumpolar cultures that has enabled them to survive for millennia has finally been recognised officially. We have now discovered that the unlimited misuse of fossil fuels by the richest countries has changed our climate. With the messages of the ACIA report in mind we stand at a crossroads. Russia has decided to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. We have a historic chance to let go of the abusive, colonial past in the Arctic. By working together with local participants we can document and re-learn traditional knowledge from the people who still know the land. I hope that Arctic representatives in Reykjavik will listen and understand these messages.

Tero Mustonen is a Finnish poet and a fisherman who manages Snowchange, a project to collect local observations of change across the Arctic. He is living in Akureyri, teaching at the Social and Economic Development Department of the University of Akureyri.

News in brief

Scouts to the Rescue



The Icelandic Scouts' Rescue Troop saved a tourist whose jeep was stuck in the mud of an unpaved road near the farm at Gljúfur. The scouts were not reported to have been bearing arms.

Stop the Press: Politicians Irresponsible!

Gunnar Helgi Kristinsson, a professor of political science at



the University of Iceland, has recently come to the conclusion that politicians seldom if ever take moral responsibility for their actions. A professor in obnoxiousology announced at the same time that water is wet.

Iceland Recognises Again



In a tradition including Estonia, Taiwan, Israel and Croatia, Iceland oversaw the Comoros Islands getting membership in the United Nations. The tiny islands, populated mostly by vanilla bean farmers and tuna fishermen and located between Mozambique and Madagascar, has seen 19 coups or attempted coups since gaining independence from France in 1975. No word yet if any Icelandic "firemen" will be sent to the region.

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SO WHO'S REALLY SANE ANYWAY?

8 US politicians who may one day be airbrushed out of history



★ Pat Buchanan ★

A man who makes Halldór Ásgrímsson look like a hippy, Buchanan started his political career as a speech writer for Richard Nixon. While winning the crucial New Hampshire primary in 1996, he lost the Republican nomination to Bob Dole. He ran for president in 2000 and asserts that many of his Florida votes were destroyed.
Best Idea: Strong proponent of farmer's rights.
Worst Idea: Proposed military spending beyond even Republican wishes.
Our favourite quote: "We must reclaim American invincibility on land, sea and air, and complete the Reagan legacy by deploying a missile defense system."

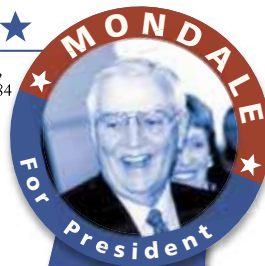


★ David McReynolds ★

A long-time socialist activist, McReynolds was nominated by the Socialist Party to run for president in 1980. He's been arrested numerous times during protests and describes himself as "homosexual, no children. Lives with two Siamese cats in East Village since 1956. Religious Atheist"
Best Idea: Trying to make America a socialist country.
Worst Idea: Trying to make America a socialist country.
Our favourite quote: "I've never found the perfect formula to blend Marx and Gandhi."

★ Walter Mondale ★

Former Minnesota senator and Jimmy Carter's vice president, Mondale got the Democratic nomination for president in 1984 and ran against Ronald Reagan. In the most crushing defeat in US history, Mondale lost every state except his home state of Minnesota and Washington DC. Many believe this was because he admitted taxes would have to be raised to save the economy, while Reagan promised not to raise them. A year later, Reagan raised taxes for middle-class families.
Best Idea: Fought to raise the minimum wage.
Worst Idea: Being honest with the electorate.
Our favourite quote: "In order to save the economy, we're going to have to raise taxes. Ronald Reagan won't tell you that; I just did."



★ Leonora Fulani ★

One of the few conservative African-American women, Dr. Fulani ran for lieutenant governor of New York for the Alliance Party and was that party's presidential candidate in 1988 and 1992. Today she's a political commentator and a member of the New Alliance Party.
Best Idea: Fighting the odds against a black woman running for president.
Worst Idea: Working on Buchanan's campaign.
Our favourite quote: "The more you give, the more you grow. Take it out of your rent. It feels very, very good," referring to how people should donate to her campaign.



★ Jello Biafra ★

Former lead singer of political punk rock band The Dead Kennedys and political activist, Biafra was nominated for the 2000 presidency by the Green Party of New York State. While never actively campaigning for the presidency, he nonetheless grudgingly accepted the nomination. He continues his activism and spoken word tours today.
Best Idea: Enacting a maximum wage, wherein all income over 100,000 dollars would go towards social programs.
Worst Idea: Not running in 2004.
Our favourite quote: "If it weren't for people not afraid of being laughed at by their peers, we'd still be living in caves today."



★ Lyndon LaRouche ★

Ran for president in 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988, and 1992. Fascinated with conspiracy theories and maintaining an elevated paranoia – replete with a residential compound equipped with barbed wire, surveillance equipment and attack dogs – LaRouche has tried to get the nomination in practically every party in America, including one he invented, the US Labor Party. All without success.
Best idea: Proposed fixing the price of oil at \$25 a barrel.
Worst idea: Proposed designating a quarantine island for the HIV positive.
Our favourite quote: "Kerry is sometimes all sizzle, and no steak; but, there are long intervals, when even the sizzle can not be heard."

★ George W. Bush ★

A man who needs no introduction. After a series of business ventures (and failures), he was governor of Texas for one term and presided over the highest number of executions for any state in the 20th century and made Houston the most polluted city in the US, surpassing former champion Los Angeles. Ran for president in 2000 and "won."
Best Idea: Deciding against postponing the 2004 elections.
Worst Idea: Transforming America into a quasi-police state.
Our favourite quote: "I stand by all the misstatements I've made."



★ Jesse Ventura ★

Best known as "The Body" from his professional wrestling days, Ventura is also a former Navy SEAL who ran and won the governorship of Minnesota in 1998, ensuring that state's place in the history among the laughing stocks of the world. While popular in his home state for a short time, grumbles within his Reform Party lead him to not seek re-election in 2002. He has since split from the Reform Party and started his own, the Independence Party, whose other members include Donald Trump.
Best Idea: The only Reform Party candidate who supported a woman's right to choose to have an abortion.
Worst Idea: Supported being able to legally carry concealed weapons.
Our favourite quote: "I'm all for gun control, I just define it a little differently. If you can put 2 rounds into the same hole from 25 meters, that's gun control!"



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“HI. MY NAME IS THOR, AND I’M AN ALCOHOLIC”

by Klemens Ólafur

9.7% of all adult males in Iceland have gone through rehab due to alcohol and drug-related “problems”. This figure of indulgence-caused hospitalizations is supposedly a world record. Everybody in the country knows an alcoholic intimately, or might even go as far as admit that he himself is not that far from being one. In Reykjavik, a town-city of ca. 112.000 inhabitants, AA-meetings are so numerous and frequent that it is possible to spend the entire day going from one meeting to another.



Some try to explain this alcoholic phenomenon by pointing out various factors, such as the climate, the extremes of light and night, and most recently, that the answer is in the Icelandic DNA, which is alleged to contain a so-called “alcoholic gene”.

All of these explications may be to some extent plausible, yet they seem unsatisfactory in explaining the enormous hold this simple substance “alcohol” has on our very souls. We have to look further still. Could it be that part of the cause for our plight is to be found in our cultural background? Let’s venture into the bloody past, into an era in which there were no AA-meetings, where there existed no such concept as the Judean “sin”, where “atonement” translated as “revenge”; the era of Odin himself.

Searching for Valkyries at the bottom of a bottle
Before blatantly selling out to Christianity, we were stout believers in the mighty gods who dwell in Ásgardur.

These deities were quite imperfect creatures: some of them excelled at throwing hammers, while others were apt at deceiving women and writing poetry; all were first-rate boozers. None of them could be described as omnipotent or all-good, and certainly not virtuous. Well, that depends on how one defines “virtue”, of course; one of their “virtues” was the very act of drinking.

Thor was the most macho of the gods (and, incidentally, a part-time transvestite). He was once defied to prove his manliness, and immediately chose the “sport” of demonstrating how much mead he could imbibe. This criterion of manhood quickly caught on among mortals and has become something of a trend, certainly in this country; indisputably our all-time favourite “sport”.

If we are brave in battle, we are to expect a certain class of women (Valkyjur) to select us as worthy enough to fall by the sword. They then pick up our souls and carry them all the long way to Valhalla: Banquet Hall of the Slain, where we shall join the celestial company of

the gods, namely Odin, our host. We are to be greeted at the surly gates by another Valkyrja offering us a decent cup of wine. In this version of heaven, there are no fair harp-strumming angels, there is no eternal peace. In fact, there is no peace at all. Instead, we fight blood-spattered battles all day long, constantly preparing for an inevitable Armageddon. And at night... at night we drink.

Heaven is a place with no hangovers

The reward, free drinks each and every night, is the greatest benefit of being a Warrior of Valhalla. The supplier of ale is Heiðrún, a mighty goat who eats from the Tree of Life and whose tits shall piss an endless stream of ale, to be drunk in perpetual festive joy and inebriation, and get every dead man dead-drunk.

The stories portraying drunkenness as a desirable state are legion in Icelandic folklore. Real heroes and poets (like Egill Skallagrímsson) get drunk before reaching the age of three. The fact that Heaven is a banquet hall with free booze is an indication too.

In latter-day Iceland, few worship the ancient gods, but “Heiðrún” still endures as the name of the largest state-run alcohol store. We remain under the firm guidance of that Goat of Goats, praying each night for a Valkyrja to take us home. It is not unlikely that our obsession with alcohol stems in part from wine-drinking being the marrow of our old-time religion and consequently a vital factor in the literature of the Sagas. Isn’t it at least as probable as some theory concerning a hypothetical gene?

Let’s end this mythological account on the origins of Icelandic alcoholism and strengthen its premise no end, by citing that most authoritative of authors, Hall dó’r Laxness himself: “To this day the Icelanders believe much more firmly and sincerely in the distilled Spirit than in God almighty; at least they’d much rather seek comfort there, than in their one true evangelical-Lutheran religion”. Amen.



MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS EDDAS AND SAGAS

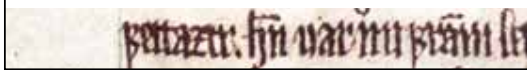
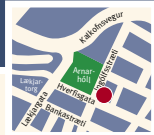
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Arni Matthíasson, Morgunblaðið

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Aaúst Bogason, Fókus

“I actually liked the album, but it sounds terrible.”
Birgir Örn Steinarrsson, Fréttablaðið

“Supposed punk rockers Ríkið are the roadside accident of Icelandic rock. Whatever musicianship the band may possess, however small, is in every case ruined by the tuneless “singing” of the “vocalist.”
Valur Gunnarsson, Grapevine

“The most organic Icelandic album of the year. By that I mean it’s crap.”
Bart Cameron, Iceland Review

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“I am not surprised that people were disinterested. Our arts committee is often responsible for events that students are not interested in. They also had an introduction to Jazz appreciation.” Online review of Ríkið lunchtime concert at the Business school of Iceland.
http://josi.klaki.net/greinar/rikid_i_verslunarskolanum/

Does a Uniform a Soldier Make?



In early September, we printed a feature on the Icelanders in Afghanistan, posing the question whether they were soldiers or not. Because of the three Icelanders

who have sadly been wounded in Afghanistan, the question remains. This debate took place on the website www.hugi.is soon after said issue came out. Excerpts:

"Grapevine is an interesting paper that should be made available in Icelandic as well. I read an article about Icelandic soldiers in Afghanistan. I feel bad about this. These are not Icelanders in foreign armies, this is an Icelandic unit with the Icelandic flag on their uniforms and they are in charge of the airport in Kabul. What do you think? Is this ok? Are you happy about this? Did you know about this?"
-cal

"You can stop feeling bad, this as not an Icelandic military unit. These are mainly firemen who are in charge of the airport there, and haven't been involved in anything but reconstruction and air traffic control. This seems to me to be a job well done by the Icelandic Foreign Office."
-Zm1

"It doesn't matter if they are called firemen, air traffic controllers or something else. These are all soldiers. These are armed people in a war zone with a licence to shoot and kill other people."
-Bessi

"These are not soldiers, and being firemen and air traffic controllers is what they do here at home. If I were to move to Afghanistan and start working at McDonalds wearing camouflage, would I then be classified as a soldier? Journalists are not classified as soldiers, even if they wear helmets in war zones."
-fabilius

"Perhaps not soldiers, but hardly civilians. Some of them are in command of other soldiers. They

are under military discipline. One of them is a major. So what's your definition?"
-USmarine

"Of course these are not civilians, they are employees of NATO, but their main task is as firemen. There are other professions than the military that use ranks such as Captain and Major and so on, for example ship crews, policemen and firemen."
-fabilius

"Really? I didn't know that firemen had majors. Do they have generals too?"
-USmarine

"No idea, perhaps its best to call the fire department and ask since I don't know their ranking system, but I am aware that other professions use these ranks. But firemen are not the only people involved."
-fabilius

"Could we Icelanders please stay away from these problems. It is noble to want to help in this war ravaged country, but I sincerely hope that we don't start investing in an army. Nobody will give us any trouble as long as we pose no threat."
-Americano

"If there is something that the Bush government has gotten out of the war on terror, it is even more terrorism and hostility. Afghanistan: ok but Iraq=idiotic and a huge mistake. If Icelanders want to join this lunacy they might as well sew bulletproof vests on their backs."
-MapleRaven

"Iceland is a member of NATO

and as such Icelanders have a responsibility to help member states engaged in Afghanistan with reconstruction and peace keeping. I like the idea of an Icelandic "unit" there at work, it shows that Icelanders are doing their bit."
-ibbets

"Iceland has been doing this for many years and will keep on doing this for many years to come, but for some reason it is rarely mentioned until now. The people out there are not soldiers in any sense. They have had no military training and I doubt that they even know how to use the weapons they have. But it is a very noble job and I hope they will continue doing it."
-Zaalot

"I think we're doing a good job over there, but I would be against Icelanders in Iraq, I think we should have nothing to do with that fiasco."
-MapleRaven

"People don't seem to be aware of the main problem with this "Icelandic unit." The problem is that the rules regarding their status is very vague. They are not soldiers according to international law but yet they carry arms and hence are targets for hostile attacks of all kinds. The have neither the rights of soldiers nor civilians in war zones, and no one really knows what rights they have. If they are captured it's not clear whether they should be treated as prisoners of war or civilians and hence hostages. This puts them in a very dangerous position, they are targets with little or no rights in a conflict area."
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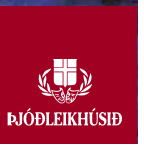






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The Struggle for New Iceland by Valur Gunnarsson

TAKE 1: The Vikings

Relations between North Americans and Icelanders did not get off to an auspicious start. The Icelanders came upon nine Native North Americans hiding beneath skin boats. Eight were executed, one escaped.

According to Greenlander's Saga, thought to be the most reliable account, the first Icelander to visit North America was a man named Bjarni Herjólfsson who was on his way to visit his father in Greenland. He missed the world's largest island and came to a land farther west. Instead of disembarking, he turned the ship back and eventually found his way to Greenland.

Once there, he met a man called Leif Ericsson who bought Bjarni's ship in the hope of finding the new land he spoke of, for perhaps the ship knew the way. He retraced Bjarni's route and came upon a place full of ice and slabs of rock. This he called Helluland (Slab-land). They sailed on and found a land filled with trees, which they called Markland, (Forest-land). Finally, he came upon a land with bigger salmon than he had ever seen, and sweet grapes fermenting into wine. This he called Vinland, or Wine-land. Leif spent the winter in Vinland and built a house there before returning home to Greenland.

His ship, the one who knew the way, was then sold to his brother Thorvald Ericsson who sailed over to Vinland and found Leif's house. He and his men spent the winter there, before sailing on along the coastline. Somewhere between what is now Newfoundland and New Jersey the eastern and western strains of humanity came into contact. For if it is true that life started around the equator in Africa and then spread north - some going west to Europe, others going east to Asia and from there to North America - they now met again. It was not to be a joyful reunion.

After the senseless massacre of the natives, Thorvald and his men were attacked by scores of North Americans and fled. Thorvald was shot down with arrows, his body left rotting in North American waters, the first white man to die on the new continent. The crew returned the ship that knew the way to Greenland, and it now came into the possession of Thorstein, a third son of Eric the Red, who also intended to sail with it to Vinland. Before being able to set off, however, plague hit the settlement in Greenland, killing Thorstein. His wife Gudrid did not grieve him for long, for while burying him in the eastern part of the country, she met an Icelander who happened to be rich and perhaps for that reason bore the name Thorfinn Karlsefni ("the eligible"). Gudrid persuaded him not just to marry her but also to continue with her deceased husband's expedition. They set off with sixty men and five women, and the ship found its way yet again back to Leif's site. They disembarked and their cows grazed in the fields and they harvested the plentiful fruit, crops and fish that Vinland offered. They also met the natives and took to trading with them, offering cows' milk in exchange for fur. This second meeting between Icelanders and Americans got off to a better start, but whether it was the Icelanders' Viking blood or the killing frenzy that seems to overtake white men in America, they soon murdered one of the natives and were consequently driven away.

The last expedition to America also ended in an orgy of violence, this time among the Vikings themselves. Freydis, a daughter of Eric, set out with a party to the oft visited Leif site. There a disagreement broke out, and Freydis had five men executed. When no one would kill the wives of the condemned, she took an ax to them herself. No further mention is made of Vinland in the Greenlander's Saga.

A quote sometimes attributed to Oscar Wilde says that Icelanders are the smartest people in the world; they found America and had the good sense to lose it again. But in actuality, the battle-hardened Vikings were driven away by the bloodshed they encountered there.

It was to be another five hundred years before an Italian stumbled onto the twin continent on his way to India, paving the way for the greatest slaughter in human history. When Icelanders did return some 900 years later, it was not as Viking conquerors but as some of the poorest of Europe's tired, hungry and poor masses.

TAKE 2: The 19th Century Immigrants

The initial Icelandic emigration to what had now become America started with an import to Iceland: the Mormon faith. Mormon missionaries from America arrived here in 1851 and soon found converts in the Westman Islands, a region always peculiarly susceptible to religious fervour. The first Icelandic Mormons moved to Utah in the mid 1850s, but these were few in number.

After the harsh winter of 1859 an organization was formed in Píngey with the intention of transporting people to Brazil. The large group that had been assembled by 1865 could not find transportation. A group of some 550 people had again registered for emigration to Brazil eight years later, but again no vessel could be found. Only a few dozen ever made it, and interest in Brazil evaporated.

Around 1870 people started traveling in small groups to Denmark or Britain, from where they emigrated to the American Midwest. At the time the Canadian government was becoming increasingly interested in attracting immigration, since as many people were moving south from Canada to the US as were emigrating to Canada from Europe. Vast areas in the west were bought from the Hudson Bay Company and added to the country, which achieved dominion status in 1867. Free land and free transportation with ships and railways was offered. The Scottish-Canadian company Allen Line set up representatives in most European countries to encourage people to emigrate. Their emissary in Scandinavia was based in Gothenburg, but by then there were already Norwegian and Swedish societies in the United States that attracted most new settlers from those countries. At first Icelanders moved along with other Scandinavians to Milwaukee in Wisconsin, but conditions did not lend themselves to the forming of a New Iceland. Attempts to do so in Nebraska and Alaska also failed.

The Allen Lines representative in Iceland was one Guðmundur Lambertsen, a Reykjavík

merchant, who got a commission in 1873. He was joined four years later by bookseller Sigfrús Eymundsson, after whom the bookstore in downtown Reykjavík is named. At first people had to get fares to Glasgow on cattle and sheep transports and from there sail on to Quebec, but the following year there were enough emigrants - around 350 - for an Allen Line ship to stop at Sauðárkrúkur on the way to Glasgow.

The Icelandic emigrants had been organized into groups, with the intention of starting settlements together. In Muskoka, Canada, the Icelanders fared so badly among other nationalities that the government of Ontario moved the group to Kinmount, where they did little better. An area which was named Markland, after Leif Eiricsson's name for Canada, was then set up. This also failed.

With the formation of the new province of Manitoba, which was in fierce competition with the US to attract immigrants, large new tracts of land were made available. A Russian religious sect similar to the Amish, the Mennonites, who were persecuted in their homeland for refusing military service, were granted a homeland with considerable autonomy in the new province. The Canadian government still did not know what to do with the hundreds of Icelanders on its hands, so the same solution was offered them. New Iceland was finally formed on the western shores of Lake Winnipeg in 1875. The land was not conducive to agriculture, and the colony required heavy subsidies from authorities, but the knowledge of a purely Icelandic inhabitation in the New World nevertheless inspired many Icelanders to emigrate west, and Icelanders' exclusive rights to settle in New Iceland were maintained until 1895. Winnipeg remains the area in North America with the strongest ties to Iceland.

The roughly 20,000 Icelanders who emigrated were a small part (0.03%) of the 52 million people who moved to North America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But since the inhabitants of Iceland in 1870 only numbered around 70,000, this was a considerable part of the population that went west. Although New Iceland did not prosper as an individual colony, some West Icelanders later became prominent, such as poet Stephan G. Stephensen, and more recently astronaut Bjarni Tryggvason and director Sturla Gunnarsson.

I Had a Dream

By Sigtryggur Baldursson

You might think that the biggest difference between living in the USA and Iceland would be the weather. Well, at least a lot of people think that.

And that is true. But not the way they think it is. You see, Americans think that Iceland is really cold all the time, (as in: what's in a name...) and Icelanders tend to think of the US in terms of Florida and California.

But I lived for a few years in Madison, Wisconsin, moonlighting as househusband by day and musician by night, a Dr Heckle and Mr Jive if you like. And let me tell you, it is cold there in the winter. Jesus Christ, I thought I was a sub zero dude, but I froze my little Icelandic ass off the first winter I was there.

In minus 25, inhale sharply and the snot freezes in your nose. This is something I had never, ever, experienced in Iceland. And as for the summers, the first apartment I had in Madison did not have air conditioning and we arrived mid-August in a heatwave. On one of my first mornings there I found myself waking in a pool of sweat, scrambling into the kitchen and emptying out half of the refrigerator (which was huge, by the way), and promptly positioning myself therein just to get the few braincells I had left to start up. Lying with my head in the fridge, I realised I wasn't designed for this kind of weather. And the bugs, dear lord, the bugs!!!!

Mosquitos are directly descended from the devil himself and funny enough, they don't exist in Iceland. In Iceland you have beaches where you can't go in the water and as for swimming in the lakes, forget it. The hot water aplenty in the shower taps smells like bad eggs but makes the girls cute. As for the people in America, I got along with them just fine since living and especially drinking is a lot cheaper in the US of A than in Iceland and on the political side, no, let's not talk about the political side, this day is going fine as it is. Let me just say that our little govern-mental hospital is almost as neo fascist as the American presi-dental hospital. Nuff said.

Don't like the TV much, I overdosed on the OJ Simpson shit that also ruined whatever faith I had in the judicial system and the death penalty. But let's not go into that.

Let me focus on some of the stuff I really like about the US. Well, jazz isn't a naughty word in my vocabulary but the sad thing is that even though the US is the cradle of jazz as we know it, many of the masters make their living in Europe or anywhere except the US. I guess advertisers don't think it sells product.



I remember fondly the forests in Wisconsin just as I remembered fondly the mountains of Iceland when I lived in the States. I even had a dream the other night that I was wandering in a Wisconsin forest, wanted to rent a horse but ended up somehow with a cat on a leash that led me to the side of a highway where I became obsessed with tightening the bolts on peoples front wheels. I kept muttering to the poor suckers I managed to stop: "you wouldn't believe how many of these little babies come off at 70 miles per hour"...

And I'm not making this up, my subconscious is. Paging doctor Freud!!! I miss my good friends over there who are some of the best people I have met, anywhere. Icelanders have something in common with the Americans as well, they think they rule. Maybe not quite in the same way, but still...

Sigtryggur was a homemaker in the US by day and a drumbeast by night. He's now back in Iceland and has resumed his rightful place as the Godfather of Icelandic drumming.

ICELAND

The Importance of Having the Freedom to Hold Idiotic Opinions

By Þór Tryggvason

When first asked to write about what was better about living in the United States than in Iceland, and what was better about living in Iceland than in the States, I was alarmed to find that I only seemed able to come up with good things about living in the States, and bad things about living in Iceland. Having been back in Iceland for a year after spending four years in the States, I thought this initial response was merely a case of 'distance makes the mountains blue', as we are wont to say here, rather than me having abandoned the culture that raised me in favor of greener pastures. Further rumination proved this to be true, as I formed a couple of wildly generalized observations about the two places.

One of my favorite things about the United States is that it is acceptable to state your preferences and opinions - however unusual, off the wall or idiotic they might be. There is tremendous freedom in this. You like James Taylor or John Cougar Mellencamp? Fine, tell people about it. Surprisingly, they won't openly ridicule you. Statements of preference are never made in Iceland without carefully gauging the cultural hipness barometer: is it still OK to like Kraftwerk? It isn't as of five minutes ago? Better not say anything then. In the States I had to gradually learn that I could like whatever I damn well pleased - and tell people about it.

The nice thing about Iceland, though, is that you can get things done so much easier than you can in the States, especially in an official or bureaucratic capacity. You can usually cajole somebody into helping you or making an exception even if you've just missed a deadline (not if I can help it. Ed). This probably ties in with the "þetta reddast" mentality that is so prevalent here in Iceland. Most people are fairly sympathetic towards someone who has no idea what they're doing (The Grapevine is, in fact, founded on that very principle. Ed.), or is looking for help in carrying out some ill-conceived plan, because they're like that themselves half the time. In the States, you may be in dire straits (serious trouble, not the band) and need to get something sorted out fast, and the person you talk to will tell you "I'm sorry, sir, but you need to fill out form W-X 243/12B in duplicate before I can process your request, which will take up to 48 hrs." and that'll be the end of that.



There is of course a flip side to both of these phenomena. The openness with which people express themselves and accept other people's opinions in the States also means that you can get away with a lot of silliness unchallenged, such as liking James Taylor or John Cougar Mellencamp. In Iceland, by contrast, your most outlandish ideas are likely to be reined in by your peers. The inflexibility of bureaucracy in the States, however, forces you to make sure that you do what needs to get done on time. Compare this with Iceland, where nobody is ever ready with anything until just past the last possible deadline. Just like this piece. (Well, what can you do. Ed)

Þór studied media in Washington, DC, and upon receiving his masters went on, like so many media degree holders, to unemployment in New York City. He returned home and now works for the Icelandic Foreign Office.

TAKE 3: War Brides and Beyond

The next era in Icelandic-North American relations began with large numbers of Americans coming to Iceland. In mid-1941, when the United States was still a neutral power in what was still a European war, it took over protection of Iceland from the hard-pressed British Army. The Americans were better paid, better dressed and had better teeth than the British, and so went over even better with the ladies. After the US entered the war and Iceland became a stopover for North Atlantic troop transports, their number peaked in 1943 at around 50,000 in a country of just over 100,000. Several attempts were made to prevent intercourse between soldiers and local women. In late 1941 groups of young Icelanders armed with clubs prowled around the military encampments and threatened soldiers found with girls. Violence was averted, but two homes were opened for these "fallen women," one in Reykjavik and the other in Borgarfjörður. The police commissioner of Reykjavik even went so far as to estimate that 20% of the women of the town were having intimate relations with soldiers.

In early 1942, the American commander, who bore the rather imposing name of General Bonesteel, forbade marriages between US soldiers and local women, and the ban was only revoked in the spring of 1944. Nevertheless, 332 women married American soldiers here before the end of the war. Many more left with their boyfriends and married them in America after the outbreak of peace. But there were also more than a few instances of women left here with the fruits of their forbidden love when their par-amours returned to their wives back home. Some of these war brides returned to Iceland after finding it difficult to adjust to life in America. But most of them stayed on, returning only as guests, and have played a prominent part in popular culture as the rich aunts bringing gifts from the land of plenty in many a post-war book

In Search of the Socialist Paradise

Paul F Nikolov

I first came to Iceland because of a fat tax refund check that I got for working illegally for most of 1997. I knew I wanted to spend the money on travel. At the time I was reading a book about the Old Norse faith and was already impressed that the pre-Christian myths, beliefs and practices had been written down at such an early stage, which seemed pretty unique. Also, Iceland seemed like the sort of travel destination where it would be very unlikely to run into other American tourists. I bought a travel book, flew over, hitchhiked around the country and made some friends. Normally, that would be the end of story.

But 1999 was a weird time for my country. Things looked like they were culminating into some giant, Revelations-style conflict. The two major political parties were more hostile than ever towards each other, the social system was slowly collapsing, and the US seemed to be making new enemies or agitating old ones. A hard, sour ball began to form in the pit of my stomach. Watching the news and seeing the overseas conflicts which my taxes were helping to pay for only added to this sense of dread as well as a sense of partial responsibility. When I tried to explain my worries to others that something awful would happen to the US soon – my feeling is that we would be attacked – I was told I was paranoid.

I could have gone to Québec to live with my uncle, or I could have picked any other country in the world. But in the brief time I had spent in Iceland, I got the impression that it was a quasi-socialist paradise. There were no handguns, the environment was much cleaner, the education was cheap and the social structure was generous. It was everything I had hoped the US could be but wasn't. I took the easy way out and moved to Iceland in September 1999.

Since moving here I've become aware that Iceland does, in fact, have imperfections. But when the biggest conflict that comes up is ownership of the media or a teacher's strike, it still makes me breathe a sigh of relief.

Of course I miss my family, malt liquor (not quite the same thing as the local Malt),

The Perfect Size for a Life

By Padraig Mara

Early one hungover morning after a hard nights Independence Day debauchery, I came rolling unsteadily home just as the sky was turning white, me and the rest of the headachy ghosts looking for their beds. I turned down my block and came upon a gentleman trying to climb through a first-floor kitchen window, a bottle of beer in each hand. He was uncoordinated as hell, he'd jump up, hold on the sill with his wrists, try and throw his leg up, slide down. He lacked technique I thought. He was way too drunk for this type of operation, obviously. Also, the beer in his hands wasn't helping at all. I stood there and watched him for a while. I remember thinking, Jesus, I'd have been in there a half an hour ago.

After some time the guy looks at me. He says "Hey, buddy, gimme a hand?". I don't say anything. I think to myself, maybe he's not supposed to be in that house. Maybe he's a burglar. He offers me a beer. Aww fuck it, I think. I boost him up and in. He crashes to the floor, I hear breaking glass. He pops his head out. "Thanks" he says, "Happy Independence Day." "Yup", I say, "likewise". I walked home in the gathering light, drinking my beer, thinking to myself, Well, I'm an Icelander now, huh?

I'm from America. The State of New Jersey, to be exact. I've lived in Iceland a little over three years now, and in that time I've thought a lot about the differences between my birthplace and my adopted home. There are many of course. The air is quite clean here, water as well. Not so in Jersey, though in parts of the States the air and water are quite pure. We're pretty far north in Iceland, we get the Northern Lights. You won't find them in Newark, but they get them in Alaska as well.

The geography is different here than where I'm from, you've got a lot of beautiful rolling nothing in Iceland. Though, I've heard that in The West there's quite a bit of beautiful nothing stored there as well. There's only one difference between here and where I'm from, only one that really means anything. The difference is that, here, on this little island, we're all in it together.

Halgrímur Helgason once wrote that Iceland is the perfect size for a life. I'd go further and say we're all sharing our lives together. Throughout the nation coffee is being poured at breaktime and the teachers strike is being discussed. As the winter turns darker, we're all getting pale and weird, keeping the razors sharp, just in case. Christmas Eve will find us all tipsy and eating sugar potatoes made by quite possibly the same Amma. New Year's we'll watch the vaguely comedic year in review on TV, dance badly in each others houses, hold each others hair back while we toss our cookies and give each other bloody noses as the fireworks reach crescendo.

And in the morning we'll all apologize. We'll tread water till spring. And the first warm day will touch us like the hand of God. We'll all pour into the street, sun ourselves in the town

and play.

Even though the army has mostly been confined to its base in Keflavik since their return in 1951, their culture was not. The first Icelandic rock bands sprang up on the outskirts of the base in Keflavik. People listened to Armed Forces Radio and watched the broadcasts on TV. Even after the advent of Icelandic TV channels, American influences are more apparent than ever. They are reflected in the way we speak, the way we think and, with the advent of fast food culture, in the way we look.

But even as Iceland became more American, Icelanders have continued to go there in increasing numbers as students, visitors and bands on the make. Björk has a home there, and other Icelanders have done well in the promised land. Hilmar Skagfield, a native of Skagafjörður and founding member of the Jazz Club of Iceland, went to Tallahassee to study accounting in 1950. He later went on to become the curtain manufacturing king of America.

Sigurjón Sighvatsson, former bass player with Brimkló, studied film making in southern California in the late 70s. He has lived and worked there ever since, producing among other things the TV series Twin Peaks and Beverly Hills 90210 and the films Wild at Heart and Barton Fink. He also brought the TV series Dynasty to Iceland on videotape.

Americans outnumber Icelanders by about 1000 to 1, and America will probably continue to have a huge influence on Iceland in the foreseeable future, for good and for bad. But Icelanders also influence America in some small way, whether it is with pockets of Sigurós fans scattered throughout dormitories or the curtains in their living room windows. And perhaps the American Icelanders will have an even greater impact someday. As former ambassador to the US Jón Baldvin Hannibalsson said in the book Amerísk draumurinn (The American Dream) by Reynir Traustason: "We still await the American dream to come fully true, and for the world to get to know a new president of the United States with the name Eiríksson or Herjólfsson. That must happen sooner or later."



Saturday Night Live and frozen microwaveable fried chicken, but I don't regret my decision for a second. In place of the creature comforts I grew up with, I'm surrounded by a booming cultural scene, have taken advantage of the affordable health care and can finally afford to attend university thanks to the comparatively low tuition here.

I think I'd probably stay here even if things got a lot better in the US. Warts and all, Iceland comes pretty damn close to the socialist paradise I was looking for. I hope it stays that way.

Paul F Nikolov is a staff journalist for Grapevine and working in a home for the aged in Gráfravogur. Any readers who have managed to get their hands on a bottle of Olde English 800 should contact him immediately.



square and attempt to fuck each other into exhaustion. This will happen from Reykjavik to Akureyri, from Egilsstaðir to Keflavik to Vestmannaeyjar. An unspoken bond throughout the nation.

Back in the States this is not so. Growing up in Jersey, Arizona may as well have been in Red China. New Mexico could be given back to Old Mexico without anyone noticing. California can sink into the ocean for all I care. And Hawaii? Well, I never really believed Hawaii existed to begin with, to be honest.

I've lived here for three years and some months. My Icelandic is, if not fluent, at least charming. Or I like to think so. No matter how long I stay here, no matter how good I get at the language, how often I eat svið, even if I change my name to Ólafur Plokkfisk Bjarturson, I'll never be Icelandic. I am however, by now an Icelander, stuck on this haunted rock in the middle of the North Atlantic, here, with all the rest of you.

Padraig Mara started life in Iceland as a ship cleaner, but has now moved on to being a cook and sometime Grapevine contributor.

U.S.A

The Meeting of the Bear Men

An Eve Online Party

by Anna Kaarina Koskinen



I felt that I had ventured onto another planet and stood out from the crowd like a slice of lemon in a glass of water. The place was filled with men in over-sized t-shirts, wearing black, behaving suspiciously jolly, talking in foreign languages, and on a closer inspection they appeared to be incredibly polite and friendly. At a glance one could have gathered that this was a meeting of single gay bear-men (what's wrong with bear-men? Or bear-men for that matter? –ed.) looking for new lovers but there was definitely another kind of feeling in the air.

It was clear that these people had something in common that strongly bound them together and they were happy to have found their kind – hence the laughter created by inside-jokes of the kind one might hear at a Star Trek convention where making fun of Spock's ears is not considered funny. This feeling only got stronger as strangers approached me only to say: "You don't play Eve, do you?" Iceland Airwaves seemed to be somewhere in a galaxy far, far away to the men who were lured from all over the world in the latter part of June to come to Iceland. The weren't here for the opportunity to hear great live music, but for a conference on the computer game Eve and a chance to meet the game's creators. There are some people who might think of having a meeting for computer geeks as an anachronism. Isn't nerdiness all about staying at home by the computer, communicating with other geeks over the Internet? It is a fact that extreme cases will not under any circumstances abandon their computers for more than two minutes at a time, to go to the bathroom or reach for the microwave pizza, but some less extreme ones couldn't resist the chance to go to a conference of which the subject was their favourite computer game.

For those not familiar with it, it should be noted that Eve is not your typical game that you play alone on your computer until you get bored with having to start over and over again from the beginning. Eve is a massive multiplayer online game (MMOG), which means that you play it over the Internet, interacting with players from all over the world (which explains why the people at the fanfest were so happy to finally have met each other face to face.) Roughly fifteen months after the game's release, there have been as many as 11.284 people playing at the same time. Part of the game's success is probably explained by its continuity – in it the world keeps turning and evolving even if you shut off your computer. Logging out means taking the chance of possibly missing out on a great battle or a once-in-an-online-lifetime opportunity. Highly addictive, in other words. While elsewhere in Reykjavik the town was filled with pop, rock and drunken people, the Evesters, far away from their computers and virtual reality, partied together talking about their battle ships parked somewhere in fictional galaxies. It was a very peaceful meeting of people who had previously fought against each other and shed a lot of virtual blood.

METAPHYSICS

by Haukur Már Helgason

A CHANGE OF TERMS

In Light of Recent Technological Innovations

A roadside. A tree. Chattering. Phone rings, a Bob Marley tune.

Godot (At the other end): Guys?
 Vladimír: Yeah.
 G: Hey.
 V: Er, hi.
 G: It's Godot.
 V: Ah, yes, hey, hi, cool ... em, how are you?
 G: Fine, fine ...
 V: ...
 G: ... er, are you still there, at the roadside?
 V: Yeah, or actually we went to town, but we're back. You didn't happen by in the meantime, did you, we didn't miss you?
 G: No no. But about that whole thing ...
 V: You're coming, aren't you?
 G: ...
 V: I mean, you want to come?
 G: ...
 V: ...
 G: ... it's not that simple.
 V: ...
 G: I don't know, sometimes everything seems so simple, for a moment or a day and you promise something but then you just don't know what you want, you know what I mean?
 V: What are you saying?
 G: I don't know, I don't know what I'm saying. Sometimes I miss you so much, there are days ... but in between I'm absolutely content, and you don't even occur to me for days in a row.
 V: If you're really going to say something that would seriously disturb me, we should talk tomorrow. We have company.
 G: Company?
 V: You know it's Friday night.
 G: Who are there?
 V: Melli and his boyfriend Julian, Miriam from Prague, and Jonni.
 G: Say hello to Melli.
 V: Sure.
 G: ...
 V: ... talk to you tomorrow.
 G: OK. Bye.
 V: Bye.

V: Godot says hello.
 Melli: Oh, yeah, thanks. When is he coming, by the way?
 V: (Sighs and rubs his head) I don't know, he intended to come last week, but then his father got ill. And then, when his father got better they stopped flying here. The low-fare airline, that is ... which means that there is a waiting list for the trains. Which I've never heard of before. I don't know ... he spoke about early next month. So he's coming, but it's, er, it's untimely to put a date on his arrival yet.
 M: Aha, I see, I see. I'm starting to look forward to seeing him again.
 V: Aren't we all.



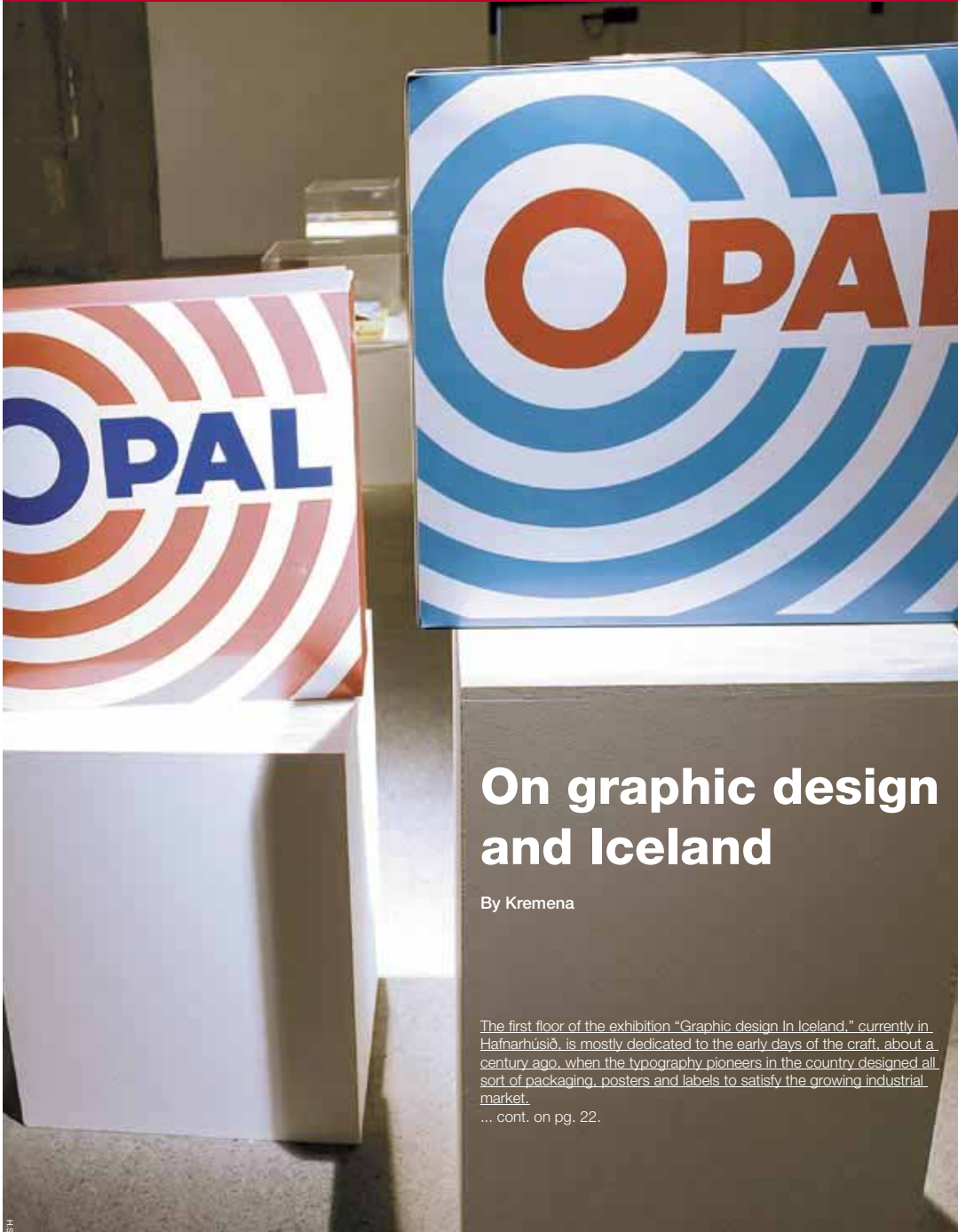
The day after a few text messages ensue.

Then, roadside again, a tree, no chattering, someone snores, a phone rings, Bob Marley tune.

G: Guys.
 V: Stop speaking to me in the plural.
 G: Sorry.
 V: ...
 G: Where did that reaction come from?
 V: Which one?
 G: Your message. „Fuck you“ – you never said „fuck you“ to me.
 V: I looked for other words, but ... I'm just very pissed off.
 G: ...
 V: ...
 G: Look, I, I don't know, I'm afraid that if I come ...
 V: You're constantly afraid.
 G: I'm afraid that if I come and it's not really, and I'm not really sure yet, then this will be just one more arbitrary meeting without consequences. I don't want that.
 V: Neither do I, Godot. And that's not where I thought we were heading.
 G: I just, I cannot be sure, I can't know that this will last ...
 V: People don't know. That's not how life is. If you come here and we hope to spend a long time together, it's hope. It might fail, but if it fails it doesn't mean you die.
 G: But that's precisely it, that's precisely how I feel, that if it fails, I die.
 V: Look, I know people who have spent their whole lives paralysed by fear, afraid of time and the future so they would rather have nothing happen – and they succeed in letting nothing happen for decades on end. And then they literally die.
 G: Please wait (his voice breaks) ...
 V: It's not even a question of decision, Godot. It's biology. If I wait for half a year more, it's me who will die.
 G: ...
 V: Even if I said „fuck you“ I don't want you to cry.
 G: ...
 V: Dear Godot ...
 G: (Sobs) What are you doing tonight?
 V: Babysitting.
 G: Can I call you then, I'm on my mobile now.
 V: Do.
 G: Don't say „fuck you“ to me.
 V: Don't let me wait.
 G: ...
 V: Speak with you tonight.
 G: Yeah. Bye.
 V: Bye.

(To be continued. (– Yes, but for how long?))

GRAPEVINE **IN** your pocket



On graphic design and Iceland

By Kremena

The first floor of the exhibition "Graphic design In Iceland," currently in Hafnarhúsið, is mostly dedicated to the early days of the craft, about a century ago, when the typography pioneers in the country designed all sort of packaging, posters and labels to satisfy the growing industrial market.

... cont. on pg. 22.



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GUIDE TO THE CITY CENTER

This pullout has all the information one might need, so for a safer journey, pull it out and put it in your pocket.

CAFE'S

1. Segafredo

By Lækjartorg
McDonald's has departed from the centre of Reykjavík and instead Italian chain Segafredo has arrived, which isn't a bad trade-off. You can smoke indoors, which gives you a nice continental feel, the staff is Italian and the prices are in Euros as well as krónur. Although Segafredo isn't one of the more expensive places, you wonder whether knowing how much things cost might ruin your vacation.

2. Ráðhúskaffi

City Hall
With view over the city pond, Ráðhúskaffi is situated inside the City Hall. Coffee and great cakes as you enjoy the view. Free internet access for customers and, in the lobby of City Hall, you'll find a big 80m² model of Iceland.

3. Grái Kötturrinn

Hverfisgata 16a
Grái Kötturrinn is across the street from the National Theater and is very small and very popular in the early hours of the day. A good place to start a day the British way, with eggs and bacon and other traditional breakfasts on the menu. The lunch menu is also inviting, but somewhat pricey.

4. Café Roma

Laugavegur 118
Is the closest thing you'll find to a New York deli in town. A lively cross-section of artists, students and office workers enjoy home baked paninis and great coffee all at low prices.

5. Mokka

Skólavörðustígur 3a
An Icelandic tradition since 1958, Mokka is the oldest café in Reykjavík and the first one to make coffee with an espresso machine. The walls are covered with art for sale and, though seats are usually filled by loyal customers, every now and then you'll catch a glimpse of the owners, a really nice and friendly couple in their seventies who have owned the café since its inception.

6. Feng Shui

Laugavegur 42b, by Frakkastígur
Inside the Feng Shui house is a café called "Teahouse of the August moon". The café just recently opened and they serve organic cakes, biscuits and the largest selection of tea in town. Try the waffle biscuits and have a Kashmir tea latte.

7. Bleika Dúfan

Laugavegur 21
The name means the Pink Pigeon. A bookstore that specialises in books in English, so there are a lot of foreigners there as well as people

who work in the surrounding area. A mostly veggie menu (apart from the ham and cheese sandwich) and internet.

8. Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27
With the exception of Mokka, Tíu Dropar is the oldest café in downtown Reykjavík. The place has a very special feel to it, the decor, the tables and the chairs, along with the service makes you feel very much at home. It's almost like you're sitting down for a cup of coffee in your grandma's kitchen. The menu is limited, but has the advantage of constant changes, with new items every day.

9. Koffitár

Bankastræti 8
The café has a different colour on every wall. It's small but has good coffee and tasty side dishes. It's one of those places that make you want to sit down and watch daily life go by on one of downtown's busiest streets, or simply just to read the newspaper.

10. Te og Kaffi

Laugavegur 24
Te og Kaffi actually manufacture the coffee for quite a few of the cafés in Reykjavík apart from running their own cafés. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the place is its staff. Most of them have actually served on the Icelandic coffee-making team. Njáll came in 4th in the international championship in Trieste this year. Jónína made freestyle champion, with her "Cup of Culture" mix, which includes orange and white chocolate among other things. Have one.

BARS & BISTRO

11. Sólón

Bankastræti 7a
Named after (in his own opinion, at least) Iceland's greatest man, Sólón is a pretty crowded nightclub on Friday and Saturday nights. It seems to have more lives than one, however, since in the day it's a fairly artsy coffeehouse and in the evening (weeknights) they have a decent menu. You can get a three course fish of the day meal for under 2000 krónur, or try the delicious fish and meat mixed sticks.

12. Café 22

Laugavegur 22
Has recently undergone a major facelift. The top floor is now dedicated to artist Jón Sæmundur, aka Dead, whose Dead label can be seen on quite a few people these days. Downstairs is a decent bistro (try the Grángol), whereas the middle floor houses a dancefloor. Open until the wee small hours, and a great place for a late night drink for those who want drink along with a less trendy (and perhaps more cool) crowd. Be warned, though, they do charge 500 krónur entrance after 01:30.

13. Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1
Kaffibarinn is Cool Reykjavík, or at least tries to be. Reykjavík prides itself on having more artists per capita than any other capital in the world, and the crowd here seem to be trying to prove the point, with musicians, actors and writers ranging from the hopefuls to the world

famous. Blar's Damon Albarning it was cheaper than buying the director of the film 101 Re in the film.

14. Sirkus

Klappargistigur 30
"Welcome to the Jungle! We g With tropical palm trees on th welcome to the party that neve ending any time soon. Usually or want to be students of the 1 musicians and other members floor, for whatever reason, look

15. Nelly's

Dinghólfstræti 2
The cheapest beer in Reykjavík drinkers as well as expats. Trou covers though. In the weekend large dancefloor on the upper f midnight on weekends.

16. Veganót

Vegamóttástigur 4
Wants to be the inport to be se up, flaunt it and enjoy the view kitchen, and the fitter, or at least brunch. Try the lobster pizza.

17. Kaffibrennsla

Pósthúlsstræti 9
One of the largest selection of few bars in Reykjavík where yo after midnight on weekends. G they are generous with the refil

18. Rósenberg

Lækjargata 2
It has a history as both a dance reopened with a Jazz theme an cover up and coming Jazz band Dóttirland Dwarfs as well as su

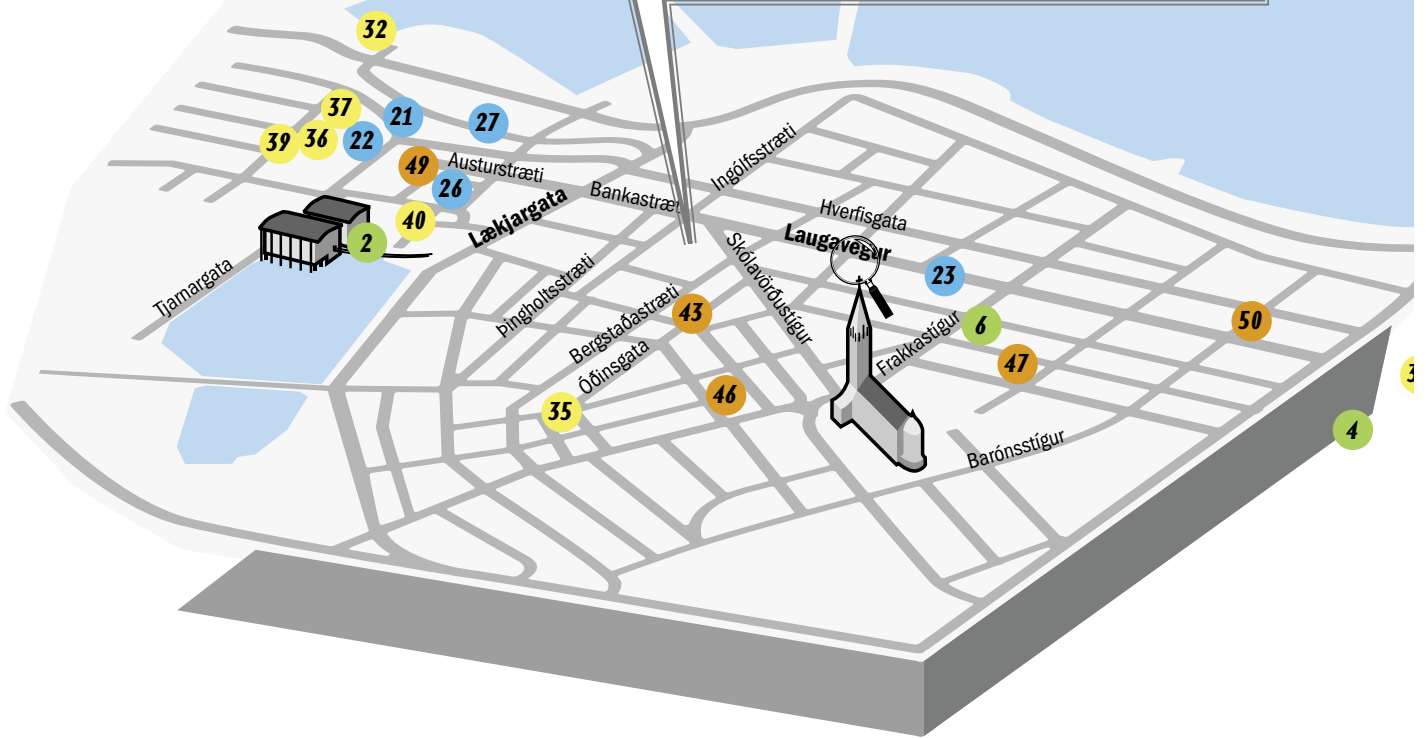
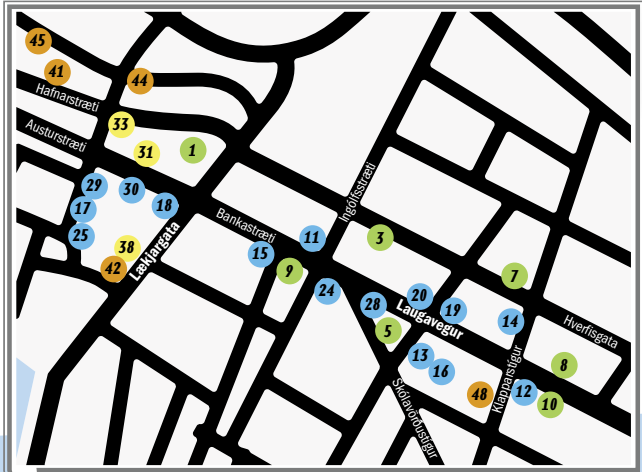
19. Grand Rokk

Smíðjástígur 6
A place true to the spirit of Ro covers. Better and lesser know less than three bands a night, 6 admission or not is up to the b starring artists. Grab a beer an



SPOT THIS Gvendur Dúllari

Immediately recognisable for the boxes and stacks of books in the window, Gvendur Dúllari offers used books in just about every conceivable genre, written in Icelandic, English, Danish, German, and French. They also pride themselves on being more than just a bookstore – you can also find old black-and-white prints and used furniture for sale. Whether you bring your old books to them to sell, buy a stack yourself, or just spend hours browsing (which is entirely possible in this sprawling store), Gvendur Dúllari offers a refreshing return to the days of good old fashioned used book stores. They're open 12 to 18 Monday through Friday, 11 to 14 on Saturdays (11 to 17 on the first Saturday of each month) and closed Sundays.



tveir fiskar

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owns a share of the bar, probably figures drinks all the time. Another owner is Þýskjök, and the bar figures prominently

of fun and games," quoth the poet. e outside and tropical heat on the inside, e came to an end and doesn't seem to be full of regulars (many of whom are, were Iceland Academy of Arts) mixed with of the city's underground. The upper e like the inside of a bus.

s, with tends to attract more experienced idadors play on most weekdays, mostly a younger crowd comes in, and there's a floor. The prices do, however, go up after

en, and succeeds to some degree. Dress s as others do the same. It's a jungle in t the fittest looking, come out on top. 2. Likes the inside of a bus

beers in Reykjavík, but it's still one of the n can attempt to maintain a conversation food coffee and, for those on a budget, lk.

and a rock club, but has recently d has started serving food. It's a place ds like the teenage Danny and the ore established acts.

ck 'n' Roll and bands that don't o Icelandic bands play there, usually no our nights a week. Whether they charge and, but if they do, all proceeds do go to d rock on! During the day this is a hang-

out for chess players, challenging each other and anyone that might wander in here for a game, as every table doubles as a chess board. One of the best places to meet locals for a chat, every night of the week.

20. Bar 11
Laugavegur 11
The rock hangout, be it live music or the riff-heavy jukebox. Many of Iceland's rock bands are regulars. Bands play and/or poetry is recited most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. A good place to come down on Sundays, with a screening of cult films.

21. Café Victor
Hafnarstræti 1-3
Spelt with a c rather than with the more traditional k in order to be more cosmopolitan. This play seems to be working, as the bar has become something of a hangout for foreigners. The Viking ship sitting on top of the house might also add to the appeal. The crowd is very mixed, both in origin and age, and so is the music.

22. Jón forseti
Ábaltstræti 10
The oldest house in Reykjavík is now, you guessed it, a gay club. Named after founding father and national hero Jón Sigurðsson, who lived there for a while, it now has various events, including concerts, plays and a gay cabaret, performed on a small stage that tries its best to look big with curtains and everything. So how long until they change George Washington's old place into a gay bar? You heard it here first.

23. Svartakaffi
Laugavegur 54
Read the newspaper, have a cup of coffee, have a philosophical conversation with your cigarette and enjoy the speciality of the house, soup in a bread. Aim high, it's out on the ground floor.

24. Prikið
Banabratsti 12
Used to be a traditional coffee house which has been around longer than any but, after a change of clientele, they now cater to a younger crowd. A diner during the day and a nightclub on weekends. You can also borrow games there, such as backgammon or chess.

25. Pósthólinn
Pósthústræti 13
Situating at Austurvöllur, Pósthólinn is a bistrot prized restaurant, a rare treat. It is also one of few restaurants in Reykjavík with decent outdoor service. Live Jazz once a week and check out the reasonably priced fish menu they have, only 1490ISK. Try the plaice.

26. Thorvaldsen
Austurstræti 8
Push as the fifth circle of hell. That said, they make a mean Mojito. DJs on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Arrive before 12 if you want to avoid the queue. Theme nights during the week, wine and cheese on Wednesdays, Finlandia nights on Fridays and Sunday roast on, well, Sundays. Civilian attire is looked down upon.

27. Gaukur á Stöng
Tryggvagata 22
Iceland's oldest bar is now in it's early thirties. During the day it's a pool pub and on weekday evenings there are live rock concerts by a mix of mainstream and underground bands. On weekends there is usually a lot of action with cover bands playing everything from Britney to the Beatles. Admission is sometimes between 500-1000 weekends, but usually it's free.

28. Kofi Tomasar Fraenda
(Uncle Toms Cabin)
Laugavegur 2
Sit down and chat with your friends, or read newspapers and magazines. Its quiet even when things are getting out of hand everywhere else, so if you're not in the mood for action this is your place. Easy to miss but still well situated, now aim low, halfway below ground floor is where it's at.

29. Hressó
Austurstræti 20
Flat Coke and surprisingly slow service for a place usually empty. The noodles are soggy and the chicken salad's chicken consists of two pieces hidden underneath. A place better left for having coffee and the not-at-all-bad Belgian waffle. And the garden is nice, weather permitting. Conclusion: time here is best spent during late night drinking benders in weekends.

30. Nasa
by Austurvöllur
Used to be a theatre, but is now a club. Great sound system and occasional live bands. The towns biggest club, but the high prices do limit the crowd somewhat. Admission 1000 kronur.

RESTAURANTS

31. La Primovera
Austurstræti 9
Everybody laughed when we discovered a contemporary restaurant that has its most notable influences from Northern Italian cooking but using local Icelandic produce. The unique menu that results from this combination features homemade pastas, risotto, gnocchi, polenta and a wide variety of the freshest vegetables, fish, poultry, meat and game. The menu, the atmosphere and a comprehensive, exclusively Italian wine list has made La Primovera a favorite among the locals. They laugh no more!!

32. Tveir fiskar
Geirgötu 9
Seafood restaurant, although they also do land-based animals. At lunchtime you can have a three course meal for 2300, which isn't too bad, all things considered. The chef has been awarded the Medal of the Order of the White Rose by the President of Finland.

33. Hornið
Hafnarstræti 15
Means "the corner" and the place lives up to its name. This is actually the oldest Italian restaurant in town, celebrating its 25th year, which says something about the scene here before then. Excellent quality pizza, pasta and salads and yet remaining one of the more affordable ones. Try the calzone.

34. Vox
Nordica Hotel
Perhaps a typical off-lobby restaurant, bistro, bar in a four-star hotel, the Vox looks at first glance like a fancy cafeteria spiced up for an official reception. But please do not let that glance throw you off! The restaurant has a modern interior with extremely un-Icelandic décor, however the kitchen saves the situation. Run by a master chef, a recent winner of the super gastro competition "Boucse d'Or", the Menu is tops.

35. 3 Frakkar
Baldurstræti 2
This is a restaurant that cannot be ignored. A very small place with an atmosphere. Here you may enjoy the house specialties of Icelandic traditional dishes prepared in the good, old-fashioned manner, including catfish, shark, and whale steaks. And of course much more. If you're lucky, Chef Úlfar Eyrsteinsson, the owner, may be present regaling the clientele with wild whaling tales. Don't forget to ask Chef Úlfar for dark Icelandic pumpkinseed bread with pure Icelandic butter, and don't forget a reservation!

36. Sjávarkjallorinn
Ábaltstræti 2
From the huge lit fish tank to the futuristic containers you get your drinking water in, Sjávarkjallorinn tries, and mostly manages to be cool. The complimentary bread comes with a delicious peanut dip, and the three fish platter is recommended. They also have a great variety of mojitos.

37. Tapas
Vesturgata 3b
For those with a bit of money and time on their hands, the evening is well spent at Tapas, where you can vie away the evening having course after course of wonderful miniature dishes served. Recommended is the garlic fried lobster and lamb in apricot sauce. If you don't feel like getting up right away afterwards, there's also a lounge to lounge in, and the paintings there are worth a look.

38. Jónfrúin
Lækjargata 4
In this global age, it can be hard to find good smørrebröd even in Copenhagen. Never fear: out here in the colonies you can still find first rate smørrebröd at Jónfrúin. They even import their own eel directly from Denmark to make one of Scandinavia's delicacies.

39. Maru
Ábaltstræti 12
Next door to the oldest house in Reykjavík is Maru, formerly known as Sticks'n Sush. Maru is the only real sushi restaurant in town. Though competition is of course a good thing, the lack of it doesn't seem to affect Maru, who serve their purpose well. The food is good and not uncommonly expensive. Try the grilled tuna. If lacking time, they have takeaway.

40. Við Tjörnina
Templarsáund 3
One of the best known fish restaurants in Iceland. The cook is Síldart member and Megás síldarkök Gunnis. It's known for innovative fish dishes made from a variety of rare fish and shellfish and related raw materials. Their respect for the raw materials is a tribute to fish and shellfish, showing off their natural goodness without artifice.

FAST FOOD

41. Nonnóbiti
Hafnarstræti 11
The owner is a miser who charges additionally for everything, but this is almost certainly the best junk food in the Greater Reykjavík area. The subs are great, none of that Subway commitment to healthy living, and they probably contribute significantly to the ever-increasing "size" of the nation. They also serve burgers and sandwiches, and have lunchtime offers.

42. Nana Taco's
Lækjargata 8
One of those places that seem to be always open, and hence you find yourself going to late on Saturday nights as consolation when it seems inevitable you'll be going home alone. And as consolations go, it's not bad. Rather reasonable by local standards, and they have all the tortillaish Mexican standards.

43. Bernhöftsbakari
Bergstaðastræti 13
A bakery with traditions going back some 150 years, although it has changed locations. Apart from a supermarket, a bakery is still the best way to fill your belly. Try the staple of Icelandic childhood and beyond, a snúður roll with chocolate milk.

44. Baejarins bestu
Tryggvagata
They claim to have the best hot dogs in town, and for once the product lives up to the hype. Ask for one with everything, and you'll get a dog in a bun with ketchup, mustard, remulade (don't ask), fried and raw onion. The standard Icelandic hotdog, only somehow it tastes better.

45. Pizza 67
Tryggvagata 26
The local pizza chain that's trying to take on the world, and who currently operate a place in the Faeroes and China, as well as all over Iceland. The have a Summer of Love theme, which doesn't really extend beyond the names of the pizzas, a few slogans and a few posters, but the pizzas are nice. They also do deliveries. They have a lunchtime buffet for 990, for those in search of quantity for the króna.

46. Eldsmiðjan
Bragagata 38a
Oven-baked pizzas simply don't get much better than this. It is slightly more expensive than other pizzerias, but well worth it. A wide selection of toppings, including that sorely missed pizza delight, squid. You can also turn the chef loose and let him decide what goes on it - you'll rarely be disappointed. Take away, order delivery, or eat in at the cozy restaurant upstairs. The paintings are worth a peek as well.

47. Vitabur
Bergþórsgata 21
Actually a bar, but best known for its hamburgers. A burger with fries for 500 is one of the best meal deals in town, but special mention must go to the Forget-Me-Not blue cheese and garlic extravaganza. The Viking beer always feels particularly cold and refreshing here.

48. First Vegetarian (Á næstu grösun)
Laugavegur 20b
Used to be called One Woman Restaurant, as there was always the same woman working there. Has new owners and a larger staff, but there is still vegetarian, with one vegan and one wheat-free dish always on offer. The only vegetarian restaurant licensed to carry beer and wine. Remains on the right side of the 1000 krónur bill at lunchtime, slips slightly over in the evening.

49. Pizza Pronto
Vallarstræti 4
Conveniently located by Ingólfrstorg, and serves slices until late at night. A good place to have a snack in between bars, particularly if you don't want a whole Hliðli. They also have a menu (in 9 languages, no less) of three sizes of pizzas with a good selection of toppings. Nice, but seems a bit pricey for the surroundings.

50. Reykjavík Bagel Company
Laugavegur 81
Situating a bit from the immediate centre but close to Hlemmur bus-stop. Bagels, wraps and coffee that might make you feel better in the morning than the more hardcore fast foods further down the street.

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Useful for Emergencies
Emergency phone 112 fire, police, ambulance
Emergency Ward, City Hospital 24hrs. 525-1000
Doctor: 1770
Dentist: 575-0505
Directory information 118
Pharmacies find your closest or call 118

Internet Cafés
Bleika díttin, Laugavegi 21, 101 Rvk, 517-1980
BSI, Vansnjárvegur 10, 101 Rvk, 591-1000
Ráðhúskaffi, City Hall, 101 Rvk, 563-2169
Netkaffi, Kringlan mall, 103 Rvk, 533-2424
Reykjavík Travel Service, Lækjargata 2, 101 Rvk, 511-2442
Ground Zero, Vallarstræti 4, 101 Rvk, 562-7776

Useful Websites
www.icetourist.is
www.visitreykjavik.is
www.grapevine.is

Car Rentals
ALP/Budget 562-6060
Avis 591-4000
Berg car rental 577-6050
Europcar 591-4050
SBK car rental 420-6000

Other Useful Numbers
City bus info, 551-2700
BSL bus info, 591-1000

Post Offices
Central Post office, Pósthústræti 5, 101 Rvk, 580-1000.
Post offices are easily found around Iceland


Laundry Services
Embla laundry, Barónsstígur 3, 101 Rvk, 552-4799
A Smiths laundry, Bergstaðastræti 2, 101 Rvk, 551-7140

Taxi services
Hreyfili-Bæjarleiðir 588-5522
Borgarhláðaróttin 552-2440
BSK 561-0000

Rent a bike
Borgarhláð, Hverfisgata 50, 101 Rvk, 551-5653
Reykjavík travel service, Lækjargata 2, 101 Rvk, 511-2442
Reykjavík Youth Hostel, Sundlaugavegur 34, 105, Rvk, 533-8110

Selected swimming pools
Laugarádaláug, Sundlaugavegur 105 Rvk.
Sundhöllin, Barónsstígur, 101 Rvk.
Vesturbæjarlaug, Hofvallahgata, 101 Rvk.

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THE ICELANDIC OPERA

THEY DON'T GIVE CHANGE



Reykjavík has no trams, trains or subways, only buses. These yellow things can take you pretty much anywhere in the Reykjavík area. It's a slow system and you might have to change buses a couple of times to get where you want to, though usually things run smoothly and on time. The price of a single fare is 220kr for an adult (60kr for children under 12). If you are in town for more than a few days, the nine ticket package for 1500kr would be a better deal. Bus cards valid for two weeks, a month or three months are also available. You have to pay as you step on board and it has to be the exact amount, unless you want to pay more for your ride. The driver cannot give you change. You can ask the driver for a free, time-limited transfer ticket if you need two buses to complete your journey.

The bus system is closed at night. You can catch your first bus between 6:40 and 7:00 in the morning, and last call is around 24:00. The main bus stops in Reykjavík are Hlemmur and Lækjartorg, where you'll be able to get all the information you need.

Don't compromise
We don't

★★★★★

"...the meals were simply the best I have enjoyed in an Icelandic restaurant this year."

Food and wine critic - Morgunblaðið Daily Newspaper
September 7th 2003

Nordica Hotel
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INTERNET CAFÉ

Museums

ASÍ Art Museum, Freyjugata 41, 511-5353
 Árbæjarsafn Folk Museum, Kistuhýlur 4, p. 557-1111
 Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum, Sigtún, p. 553-2155
 Culture House, Hverfisgata 15, p. 545-1400
 Einar Jónsson, Sculpture museum, Einarsgata, p. 551-3797
 Gerðarsafn, Kópavogur Art Gallery, Hamraborg 4, p. 551-3797
 Hafnarborg Art Gallery, Strandgata 34 Hafnarfj, 555-0080
 Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art museum, Tryggvagata 17, p. 590-1200
 Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Hlemmur 5, p. 590-0500
 Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum, Flokagata, p. 517-1290
 Museum of Medical History, Nestroð 170, p. 561-1016
 National Gallery of Iceland, Frikirkjuvegur 7, p. 515-9600
 Nordic House, Sturlugata 5, p. 551-7030
 Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15, p. 563-1750
 Reykjavík Elestrivty Museum, Rafstöðvarvegur, p. 567-9009
 Reykjavík Museum of Photography, Tryggvagata 15, p. 563-1790
 Reykjavík Zoo & Family Park, Engjavegur, p. 575-7800
 Saga Museum, Perlan Óskjuhlíð, p. 511-1517
 Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum, Lauganestangi 70, p. 553-2906

Galleries

101 Gallery, Hverfisgata 18a
 Gallery Kling og Bang, Laugavegi 23, p. 822-0402
 Gallery Fold, Raðarástigur 14-16, p. 551-0400
 Gallery Hnoss, Skólavörðustígur 16, p. 561-8485
 Gallery i8, Klappartígur 33, p. 551-3666
 Gallery Meistarar Jakob, Skólavörðustígur 5, p. 552-7161
 Gallery Skuggi, Hverfisgata 39, p. 511-1139
 Gallery Smiðar og skart, Skólavörðustígur 16a, p. 561-4090
 Gallery Tukt, Pósthússtræti 3-5, p. 520-4600
 Handverk og Hönnun, Aðalstræti 12, p. 551-7595
 Kirsuberjatræð, Vesturgötu 4, p. 562-8990
 Safn, Laugavegur 37, p. 561-8777
 The Icelandic Printmakers Association, Tryggvagata 17, p. 588-7576

Other

Klink og Bang, Brautarholt, p. 822-0402
 Salurinn Concert Hall, Hamraborg 6, p. 570-0400
 Tónlistarþróunarmiðstöð (TPM), Hólmaslóð 2, p. 824-3002

Theaters

Icelandic Dance Company, Listabraut 4, p. 588-0900
 National Theatre of Iceland, Hverfisgata 19, p. 551-1200
 Reykjavík City Theatre, Listabraut 3, p. 568-5500
 The Icelandic Opera, Ingólfrstræti, p. 511-6400

Restaurants

3 Frakkar, Baldursgata 14, p. 552-3939
 Café Opera, Lækjargata 2, p. 552-9499
 Hornið, Hafnarstræti 15, p. 551-3340
 Jómfrúin, Lækjargata 4, p. 551-0100
 Maru, Aðalstræti 12, p. 511-4440
 Pasta Basta, Klappartígur 38, p. 511-2238
 Sjúvarkjallarinn, Aðalstræti 2, p. 511-1212
 Tapas, Vesturgata 3b, p. 551-2344
 Tjarnarbakkinn, Vonarstræti 2, p. 562-9700

Tveir Fiskar, Geirsgata 9, p. 511-3474
 Við Tjörnina, Templararúnd 3, p. 551-8666
 Vox Nordica Hotel, Suðurlandsbraut 2, p. 444-5050

Cafés

Bleika Dúfan, Laugavegur 21, p. 517-1980
 Café Paris, Austurstræti 14, p. 551-1020
 Café Roma, Laugavegi 118, p. 562-0020
 Feng Shui, Laugavegur 42b, p. 551-8686
 Grái Kötturrinn, Hverfisgata 16a, p. 551-1544
 Kaffivagninn, Grandagarður 10, p. 551-5932
 Kaffitár, Bankastræti 8, p. 588-0440
 Mokka, Skólavörðustígur 3a, p. 552-1174
 Ráðhúskaffi, City Hall, p. 563-2169
 Segafredo by Lækjartorg main square.
 Te og Kaffi, Laugavegur 27, p. 533-6262

Café, Bar and Bistro

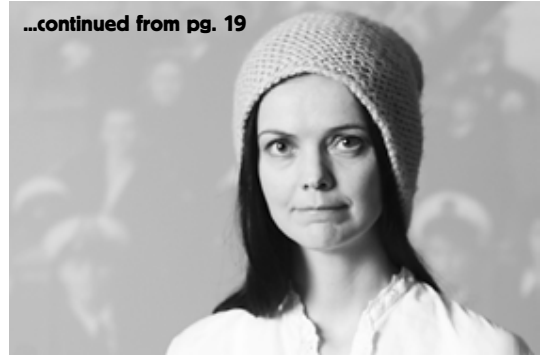
Ari í Ögri, Ingólfrstræti 3, p. 551-9660
 Bar 11, Laugavegur 11, p. 511-1180
 Café 22, Laugavegur 22, p. 511-5522
 Café List, Laugavegur 20a, p. 511-1420
 Café Victor, Hafnarstræti 1-3, p. 561-9555
 Dubliner, Hafnarstræti 4, 511-3233
 Gaukur á Stöng, Tryggvagata 22, p. 551-1556
 Glumbar, Tryggvagata 20, p. 552-6868
 Grand Rokk, Smiðustígur 6, p. 551-5522
 Hressingarskálinn, Austurstræti 20, p. 561-2240
 Hverfisbar, Hverfisgata 20, p. 511-6700
 Jón Forseti, Aðalstræti 4, 511-3233
 Kaffi Kúltur, Hverfisgötu 18, p. 530-9314
 Kaffibærinn, Bergstaðastræti 1, p. 551-1588
 Kaffibrenslan, Pósthússtræti 9, p. 561-3600
 Leikhúskjallarinn, Hverfisgata 19, p. 551-6010
 Nasa, by Austurvöllur, p. 511-1313
 Nelly's, Þingholtsstræti 2, p. 551-2477
 Mojito, Austurstræti 16, p. 575-7905
 Prikkið, Bankastræti 12, p. 551-3366
 Pósthúsin, Pósthússtræti 13, 562-7830
 Rósenberg, Lækjargötu 2, p. 551-8008
 Sirkus, Klappartígur 30
 Sólon, Bankastræti 7a, p. 562-3232
 Thorvaldsen bar, Austurstræti 8, p. 511-1413
 Vegamót, Vegamótastígur 4, p. 511-3040

Fastfood

Bæjarins bestu, Tryggvagata, p. 894-4515
 Bernhöfðsbakari, Bergstaðastræti 13, p. 551-3083
 Eldsmiðjan, Bragagata 38a, p. 562-3838
 First Vegetarian (Á næstu grösum), Laugavegur 20b, p. 552-8410
 Hlíðli, Ingólfrtorgi, p. 511-3500
 Mama Taco's, Lækjargata 8, 551-5513
 Nonnabiti, Hafnarstræti 11, p. 551-2312
 Pizza 67, Tryggvagata 26, p. 561-9900
 Pizza Pronto, Vallarstræti 4, p. 517-5445
 Reykjavík Bagel Company, Laugavegur 81, p. 511-4500
 Vitabar, Bergþórugata 21, p. 551-7200

ADDRESS BOOK

...continued from pg. 19



I found particularly interesting the designs of the Icelandic króna and the first stamps after Independence from Denmark. One of the stamp-designs is by the famous Icelandic modernist Kjarval, which I found strikingly different from the rest, and could easily have been made today. In the logo section, there was a large number of familiar designs. Reading the names of the creators, I came across the same people over and over again. Snæfríður, the curator, said that many of the designers become specialized in some area of design. Some just do logos, for example.

On the second floor there is mainly new work, from TV advertisements and video-work to computer-generated prints. A film about the history of advertisements in Iceland is projected at three different locations and at different paces. The pieces are also divided into periods, as is apparent from the styles in question. Graphic design is a huge field, and trying to show everything, one inevitably runs the risk of globalizing too much.

At the entrance I found the promotional poster-brochure, which is written by Goddur- both in Icelandic and English. Goddur studied multi-media at Emily Carr's college in Canada, one of the best art schools in the world. The intro is a summary from the era of manuscripts to Gutenberg and on to Bauhaus and the present day of computer technology. This is informative enough for beginners, but reminds me a bit of my Phaidon Encyclopedia of Art.

I have often been asked why I came to study graphic design in Iceland of all places in the world. One of the reasons is because I like the simplicity and the union with nature in the Nordic countries.

Icelanders are very well-educated: with the help of the Student Loan System as well as their talents, they graduate from the most prestigious schools in the world. And what is remarkable is that they come back here to work in their homeland, bringing new creative blood into the country.

THEATRE: LISTINGS : november 5 - desember 2

THE NATIONAL THEATRE OF ICELAND

Edith Piaf by Sigurður Pálsson, 20:00. 6/11, 13/11, 19/11, 25/11, 26/11, 4/12, 11/12, 29/12.
Dýrin í Hálsaskógi by Thorbjörn Egner, 14:00. 7/11, 14/11, 21/11, 28/11.
Petta er allt að koma by Hallgrímur Helgason, 20:00. 5/11, 12/11, 20/11, 24/11.
Norður by Hrafnbjörnur H. Guðmundsdóttir, 20:00. 3/11, 7/11, 11/11, 14/11, 18/11, 21/11, 27/11, 28/11
Listin að deyja by Kristján Ingi-marrsson og Paolo Nani 4/11
Ern eftir aldri by Auður Bjarnadóttir, 20:00. 17/11 (premier),

23/11.
Böndin á milli okkar by Kristján Þór Hrafnsson, 20:00. 5/11, 7/11, 12/11, 14/11, 18/11, 20/11, 27/11, 28/11.
Svoört mjólk by Vasilij Stigarjov, 20:00. 13/11, 14/11, 18/11, 19/11, 25/11, 26/11
Nitjándundruð by Alessandro Baricco. 12/11 (premier), 20/11, 21/11, 26/11.

THE ICELANDIC OPREA
Sweeney Todd by Stephen Sond-heim, 20:00. 12/11, 14/11, 19/11, 21/11, 27/11.
The Little Girl with the Matches by H.C. Andersen, 14:00. 6/11, 7/11 (13:00).

CITY THEATRE

Chicago by J.Kander, F.Ebb og B.Fosse (20:00) 6/11, 13/11, 20/11, 27/11
Belgiska Kongó, 20:00. 4/11, 7/11, 21/11, 28/11
Héri Hérason (Lapin Lapin) by Coline Serrau, 20:00. 5/11, 14/11, 19/11
Geitin, by Edward Albee, 20:00. 5/11, 14/11, 19/11.
Lína Langsokkur by Astrid Lindgren, 14:00. 7/11, 14/11, 21/11, 28/11, 05/12.
Sovik by Harold Pinter, 20:00. 12/11, 14/11, 19/11, 21/11, 26/11
 Icelandic Dance Company: Screensaver, 20:00. 7/11, 12/11, 21/11

THE REYKJAVÍK FILM FESTIVAL



What's the difference between a big-budget feature film and a low-budget independent film? The assumption once was that major releases got the money for their promotion because they were in fact better films and that if a movie didn't have the funding for promotion, well, that was probably because they just weren't very good. Over the past fifteen years or so, however, outstanding independent feature films have slowly received more of the attention they deserve to the point where today, a large segment of the movie-going public no longer equates high publicity with high quality and independent films are almost accepted with same openness as a major feature.

In the spirit of Icelandic independent film, the Reykjavík Film Festival features film screenings, discussions, lectures, and a conference on film and society with distinguished guests, such as director Guy Maddin and producer Sigurjón Sighvatsson. The film program consists of sixteen feature and documentary films that

reflect Icelandic filmmaking in an international context. Among the film screened are Guy Maddin's new feature film *The Saddest Music in the World*, a number of critically acclaimed films by Canadian-Icelandic director Sturla Gunnarsson, director María Sólrún Gunnarsdóttir's award-winning film *Jargo*, Helgi Felixson's and Titti Johnson's documentary *Beneath the Stars* and Hrafnhildur Gunnarsdóttir's film on third-generation Palestinians living in refugee camps in Lebanon, *Alive in Limbo*. The films screened at the program share a widely international and multi-cultural focus. Among films in the side program are Jehane Noujaim's documentary *Control Room*, which deals with media coverage of the Iraq War, and two critically acclaimed films from the Balkans, *Mila from Mars* and *Beneath Her Window*.

For information on screening times and locations, go to reykjavikfilmfestival.com

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 for further information contact: 511 1180 or 663 7273

MOVIES AND THEATRE



BITTER COFFEE OR: THE WORST MOOD IN THE HISTORY OF THIS DIRECTOR

In what seems to be becoming an alarming trend, film director Þórkur Gunnarsson explains how getting beaten up influenced his career.

What got you interested in film making?

I first got interested in film making when I changed a short story which I had sold to a literature magazine in Iceland for 5000 kronur into a short film script which I sold for 200.000 kronur. I never had thought of films until then.

What film makers have influenced you most?

Probably the Czech film director Jiri Kaiser. And how?

He beat me up in a pub so badly that I didn't go out of my apartment for a month. That was the month I wrote the script for Bitter Coffee.

How did you put together such an international cast?

The Prague I know is pretty international, I hang around all kinds of nationalities here, except Icelanders. There aren't many of them here, but then again there aren't many of them in Iceland either.

A part of this film revolves around how a trip strains the relationships between these people.

What kind of logistical problems did you run into travelling with an entire film crew?

We ran into all kinds of problems, catastrophic weather, the worst flood in the history of this country, the worst mood in the history of

this director, arguments, debts, no money, no food, but we finished the film and we are all extremely proud of it.

What are you doing in Prague these days?

At the moment I'm drinking coffee and thinking about how to get 50 million kronur to do my next project.

Why did you decide to shoot this film in the Czech Republic, and how does the film world in eastern Europe differ from western Europe?

The main difference is that it is situated a bit more to the east on the map. I can't see any other difference after I got over the language barrier.

Any future projects on the table?

Yes, on my table there's coffee, water, a pack of cigarettes, an ashtray and a computer, displaying the script of my next film about a bitter youngster who is going to make his first film. It is a comedy, based on my experience of making the last film. You see, I'm so egocentric that I'm not interested in telling any story other than my own. I hope the film after that will be about a famous and filthy rich filmmaker, based on my experience of making my second film...

MOVIES : LISTINGS : november 5 - desember 2

REGNBÖGINN

Hverfisgata 54
Phone: 551-9000
www.regnboginn.is

PREMIERS:

04 nov. Forgotten
18 nov. Bad Santa
25. nov. Christmas with the Cranks

Still running:

Alien Vs. Predator, Blindsker, Anacondas, White Chicks, Dis.

LAUGARÁS BÍÓ

Laugarás
Phone: 553-2075
www.laugarasbio.is

PREMIERS:

12. nov. After the Sunset
19. nov. Bridget Jones 2

Still running:

Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow, Manchurian Candidate, Shark Tale (dubbed), Cellular, Collateral, Lif og fjör á saltkráku (dubbed).

SAMBÍÓN

Álfabakka 8
Phone: 587-8900
www.sambio.is

PREMIERS:

05 nov. A Cinderella Story
05 nov. Ladder 49
19. nov. Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason
26. nov. Without a Paddle
28. nov. Open Water

Still running:

Shark Tale, Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow, Shall We Dance?, Two Brothers, Wimbledon.

SMÁRABÍÓ

Smáralind
Phone: 564-0000
www.smarabio.is

PREMIERS:

04 nov. Forgotten
18 nov. Bad Santa
25. nov. Christmas with the Cranks

Still running:

Alien Vs. Predator, The Manchurian Candidate, Blindsker, Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story, Pokemon 5 - Hetjur (dubbed), Anacondas, Garfield (dubbed)

SAMBÍÓN

Kringlan 4-6
Phone: 588-0800
www.sambio.is

PREMIERS:

05 nov. A Cinderella Story
05 nov. Ladder 49
19. nov. Bridget Jones: 2
26. nov. Without a Paddle
28. nov. Open Water

Still running:

Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow, Two Brothers, The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement, Exorcist: The Beginning, The Gathering.

Screenings start roughly every two hours, at 18, 20 and 22. However, with films getting ever longer, starting times may vary. There are usually ads and trailers for roughly 15 minutes from announced starting time. Almost all films have a short intermission. The still running films may not precise, the premiers are usually correct.

HÁSKÓLABÍÓ

Hagatorg
Phone: 530-1919
www.haskolabio.is

PREMIERS:

5. nov. Ladder 49, Buddy, Kopps, Miffo, Smala Sussie.
12. nov. If Only
19. nov. Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason.

Still running:

Shall We Dance?, Hákarlasaga (dubbed), Bitter Coffee (Silný kafe), Wimbledon, Næsland, The Terminal.

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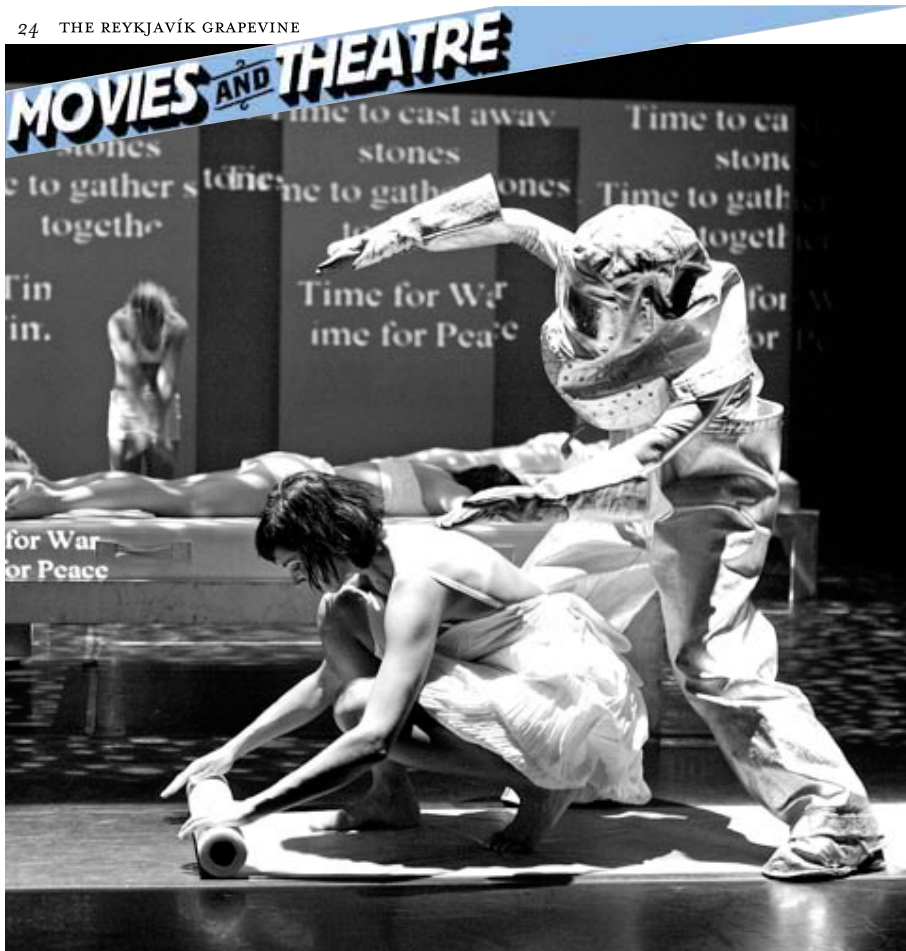
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SCREENSAVER: A Time to Weep, a Time to Laugh

by Stacy Steinberg

Why, exactly, Israeli choreographer Rami Be'er's "Screensaver" was chosen to open the Icelandic Dance Company's 2004-2005 season at Borgarleikhúsið is not immediately obvious. After all, it's a piece about coping with the stresses of daily life, and surely the day-to-day problems of Israelis and Icelanders are not the most similar in the world.



A few minutes of watching, though, and it's clear that, whatever the reasoning behind the selection, the work's presence here should be celebrated, and not just because of the pretty video projections (designed by Be'er from Irit Batsry's video trilogy "Beyond Utopia"). Rather, the piece is a joy to watch because Be'er possesses that surprisingly rare ability to combine individual steps into coherent dance phrases, and in this work he has pushed that facility, along with a willingness to try new things, to its limit. It also doesn't hurt that the match between the choreographer's movement style and the dancers' training and sensibility is close to perfect.

The piece, performed to a recorded score of mixed modern and classical composers

designed by Alex Claude, begins in screensaver mode. Floor to ceiling, the stage area becomes a screen and multiple projections of numbers, probably parts of dates, stream around in that familiar, fractal-like, computer-way. Behind a scrim, a woman in a short white dress writhes with a bustle. The house-lights dim, an entrance carpet is unrolled, and a projection of words from Ecclesiastes, "a time to weep/ a time to laugh/ a time to mourn/ a time to dance," announces the work's theme. We're off, into a world that is somehow completely delineated by Be'er's ingenious set of five platform beds.

In this world, screensaver time, when feelings are turned off and we move without thinking, dancers move in unison, each oblivious to the

presence of the others. Often they're each on their own mini-stage, a bed. The bed-world also includes a second mode, when we touch the space bar and say something. Here we have same-sex and opposite-sex love duets (sometimes two at once), and one pas de trois. The music is gentler, usually classical. The beds are used as beds, of course, but the frames stood-up with their supporting bars also function as ladders, and as casters of romantic trellis patterns.

Be'er's roots are in the modern contract-and-release school, and he doesn't abandon that style here. Somehow, though, he manages to avoid the clichés of the idiom, especially in the duets, and he also works to give us juicy new images, such as when five women stalk

around on tip-toe, their arms arched like a child's drawing of a seagull. His "Screensaver" pulls us in with its detailed movement, rich atmosphere and the confident self-awareness he has elicited from the dancers. Finally, though, the alteration of screensaver-section, love-connection scene becomes monotonous. The individual incidents don't build to anything, and by about half-way through, what we will see next is no longer in question. A bit like a screensaver.

Shown on the main stage of the City Theatre. 7th, 12th and 21st of November

*Tickets: 2.700kr, 2.200 for students
Contact 568-8000
midasala@borgarleikhus.is*



The Swedes Take Háskólabíó

Thank God for film festivals. Háskólabíó will be treating us to a Nordic film festival from the 5th to the 15th of November. On offer are four Swedish films; One of them is the typically joyful Midsommar, about a 19 year old student who whose sister commits suicide under mysterious circumstances. Lighter fare includes Smala Sussie, about a man who returns to his hometown to find his sister and finds that things have changed, Miifo, about a priest desperately trying to get church attendance up, and Kops, the follow up to Swedish-Lebanese director Josef Fares 2000 hit Jalla Jalla. Norway is represented by Buddy, a film about a man whose diaries became a surprise hit, and Mors Elling, the sequel to the surprisingly funny Elling from 2001. And that's, er, it. The Swedes and the Norwegians are on a roll these days, and the absence of Danes can be excused with the recent Danish film festival in Regnboginn. But where are the Finns? Hopefully, the Swedish-Finnish Populærmusikk fran Vittula, based on Mikael Niemi's wonderful book of the same name, will be upon these shores before too long. Meanwhile, a little taste of Sweden is a welcome diversion from the regular Hollywood fare.

"This show is a victory!"
Th.T. Mbl

CHICAGO

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BLACK MILK: A Revelation on the Reykjavík Stage



By Valur Gunnarsson

There's nothing quite as sad as seeing an elderly Russian woman standing on a corner, peddling the medals the party awarded her for service to the motherland, the only thing she has left to sell after the collapse of both the party and the state that she had counted on to support her in old age.

The first time I went to Russia five years ago, a Russian professor told me people had gotten used to a state of perpetual crisis. What that means is that the hardy Russians have all in one way or another learnt to deal with the situation. Some people grow potatoes in their back yard, colonels drive taxis at night when pay is not forthcoming, somebody's cousin owns a truck and in the weekend they run a delivery service. Every car can be hailed as a taxi and every spare room is let out. But this also means that the crisis situation is not likely to be resolved anytime soon, neither from above nor below.

It is this that is the background for *Black Milk*, a new play by the 27 year old playwright Vassily Sigarev and his first to make it to the Reykjavík stage. Sigarev is a bright young thing in European playwrighting these days, but not very popular in his home country where he tends to be denounced as a dilettante and drunk. Perhaps his very dark and gloomy depictions of modern day Russia are hard for his countrymen to bear, just as Laxness descriptions of rural Iceland made him disliked by the farmers in this country, some of whom still hold a grudge.

The aspiring New Russians in *Black Milk* travel the countryside selling overpriced toasters and the not so new Russians sell homemade—and in some cases lethal—vodka on the side.

The stage looks simple but effective. A run down train station with a booth spelling "Kacca." The characters all look stereotypically Russian: the old drunk singing patriotic songs, the elderly lady with her headscarf, the young man with the shaved head wearing trainers; the Russian lowlife archetype evident in films such as the Danish *I Kina Spiser de Hunde*.

Whether this is an accurate depiction of rural Russia I can only guess. But once the actors start to speak, you cannot believe these characters are anything but real; they draw you in until you almost want to get out again. Usually a performance of a new play is judged from the quality of the text, the playwrighting itself. But here, the very notion that you are watching a play is quickly forgotten.

I've never seen acting as intense on the Icelandic stage, never seen actors perform this close to the edge. As the play progresses you almost feel you should get up and try to stop Ljovtsík from beating up poor Shura, and you're not even sure whether it's the characters or the actors themselves you're worried about.

As things come to a head, Shuras small hope of starting a better life is quickly extinguished by her lover. The menace actor Ólafur Egill Ólafsson manages to put into his denunciation of her past establishes him as easily the best actor of his generation, in this country at the very least. By the time it is all over, and the actors come out for their accolades, they are still visibly shaking, their hearts racing as are those of the audience. Perhaps they are still acting now, but if so, it only further demonstrates their ability. Small wonder that the play is only performed once every two weeks. Doing this every night would no doubt push the actors to the very brink of sanity. But the next time they do come out, those present will be in for an unforgettable experience.

Full of sound and fury: ÚLFHAMSSAGA makes the stage



By Eyvindur Karlsson

It was with some glee and excitement that I sat down to take in the sights and sounds of *Úlfhamssaga* in Hafnarfjarðarleikhúsið. An added bonus was that one of my favorite Icelandic writers—Andri Snær Magnason—adapted it to the stage. The sights and sounds were amazing. The show is a technological feat. It utilizes great video and lighting effects to create an atmosphere unlike anything I've ever seen in the theater. However, the direction comes off as somewhat undisciplined, because

the video and the lights are much too dominant. Call me a minimalist if you will, but I am of the opinion that any oh-so-cool effects that don't explicitly serve the purpose of the play are unnecessary. It was all very well done, but it really draws the attention away from the actors and the action on stage, and this is a capital sin in the theater.

But while the sights are a trifle disappointing, the sounds are magnificent. The music is in the able hands of singer/musician Eivør Pálsdóttir, and she pulls it off with amazing grace. She performs most of it live in the theater, singing beautifully as well as playing guitar and percussion, and it adds a fantastic feel to the whole experience. The music by itself makes the show worth checking out. The play is very well adapted, and the story is of course a great one. But the trouble is... it's all too much.



SWEENEY TODD in the Icelandic Opera

by Helena Ósk Óskarsdóttir

The demon barber of Fleet Street is back in business and a cut above the rest. The Icelandic Opera has recently started showing Stephen Sondheim's highly comical horror opera, *Sweeney Todd*.

The infamous tale is about a vengeful barber named Benjamin Barker who comes back to London, having previously escaped from wrongful banishment by the evil judge Turpin. He resumes his old profession as a barber under the assumed name of Sweeney Todd, but after killing a man who threatened to reveal his identity, his lonely neighbour Mrs. Lóett persuades him to let her use the human meat in her pies. After this there is no turning back. They both become very successful, Sweeney shaving and occasionally killing his clients, Mrs. Lóett baking the best pies in London. Sweeney believes that he will soon get his revenge on judge Turpin, but will Sweeney's murdering ways bring justice to him or him to justice?

The stage design

Sweeney Todd is the most multilayered set that the Opera has ever put up comes as a fresh breeze with its clever, complex and impressive stage. The designers were Snorri Freyr Hilmarrson and Stígur Steinþórsson and their design sometimes steals the show completely. The barber chair Sweeney uses is a pivotal part of the show. An ordinary old barber chair from the Operas' makeup room was given an upgrade to become the cold and vicious instrument of the murdering Sweeney Todd. By a pull of a lever the bodies are thrown down a trapdoor straight from the chair down to Mrs. Lóett. Both the chair and the trapdoor turned out to be a difficult task for the designers as sliding singers safely off the stage down a shoot is not as easy as it sounds.

The Icelandic translation is masterfully done by Gísli Rúnar Jónsson and directed by Magnús Geir Þórðarson. The title role is in the hands of newcomer Ágúst Ólafsson and he is accompanied by some of Iceland's best opera singers.



Looking at the Future from 1965 | by Jónas Moody

Who says that solid, long-lasting relationships can't come out of an orgy? The boys from Apparát Organ Quartet would strongly disagree. The group was first assembled in 1999 under the auspices of Kitchen Motors Records at one of their "orgy of..." concerts, this one centered on electronic organ players.

The four organists in the band, Jóhann, Úlfur, Hörður, and Musíkatur, use all of their 40 fingers to bring out a dazzling array of sounds from their collection of instruments, which include two Italian Farfisas from the 1960s, a Yamaha, a Hammond, a bass, a Moog and, my personal favorite, the FunMachine by Baldwin. Their gear is somewhat dated (if Robby the Robot were a keyboard), but these clunkers are more than just the instruments; they are the essence of this project. The variety of sounds they are able to create from this mix is remarkable: much of the music explores electronica and can become heavy, but when the band decides to reconceive itself as a rock 'n' roll band, they put guitars to shame. Behind some of their finer moments sits drummer Arnar

who, despite being the odd man out, provides real lifeblood to the percussionless organs. With their keyboards they are able to achieve hair metal climaxes without so much as plucking a string. Songs like Romantica and Stereo Rock & Roll really take hold of the audience in a way you just don't expect organs to be able to do. While the band's music is anything but bound to the organs, their bodies are. During the show the players can't really move out from behind their keyboards, which leaves very little room for thrashing about or other stage shenanigans. Úlfur bemoans the plight of the rock organist, "We're just less physical. It's harder for us to look cool, so we try to make up for it. We want to indulge our audiences, so we put a lot of work into it." But if anything,

the band looks as cool and collected as funeral directors. There is a certain chic to the organ and they seem to have found it. The stage is decked in golden tinsel, there are loads of colored spots flitting around, and they've trumped your run-of-the-mill fog machine with a mighty bubble machine. Staring at them recalls memories of Kraftwerk, what with their roboto-dancing, but Apparát has mechanism all its own. I feel I am looking at the future from 1965, and I like what I see. Band members predict that drum machines will take over, Richard Branson's shuttles to the moon will mark the beginning of a new era in public transportation, and that Yotel's new line of automated, cubicle hotel rooms will be the new way to travel. Apparát is no cheap date; the band has been known to treat the masses to cigars and honey vodka. An all water-based show is in the works. Apparát laughs in the face of electrocution! Anything for the fans.

JÓHANN JÓHANNSSON "Virðulegu forsetar", CD/DVD Audio

When not delivering catchy melodies on vintage synthesizers in electronic rock outfit Apparát Organ Quartet, Jóhann Jóhannsson makes albums of mellow and beautiful contemporary classical compositions mixed with electronica and released on prestigious UK avant-garde label Touch. His second solo album "Virðulegu forsetar" consists of an hour-long piece in four movements and was recorded in Hallgrímskirkja, performed mainly with wind instruments by the Caput ensemble. Compared to his first album, "Englabörn," the electronics have here been pushed further away into the background, to serve only as an icy undertone to the slow and foreboding compositions. This might very well be where part of Jóhann's strength lies – in the ability to successfully integrate electronic elements that could be made to sound hostile, but instead work very well with the atmospheres and harmonies, while at the same time providing an uneasy counterpart and an element of chaos to the meditative beauty of the work.

For those of us who missed the highly acclaimed staging of the piece back in 2003, this is a chance to catch up. Using DVD Audio technology, the release is aimed at partially recreating the powerful sound of the actual performances, but then of course you need to have more than a decent stereo.

by Klas Molde



albums

NOVEMBER

Sónet: Hljómar – Hljómar. Iceland's Beatles return yet again, after their very successful reunion last year. **Búðrýgindi – Jústapós.** New and supposedly very upbeat album.

Skífan: The Blue Planet. A radio play version of the children's book by Andri Snær Magnason. **Ísvörtum fötum.** The third album by Iceland's premier plastic soul band. **Prjór systur.** A Christmas album by sisters Disella, Ingibjörg and Þórunn. **Blindsker DVD.** Rockumentary of the king of Icelandic rock with lots of bonus material.

12 Tónar: Eivör Pálsdóttir – Eivör. The Faroe Islands greatest export releases the follow up to last year's hit Krákan. **Edit Píaf.** The soundtrack from the successful play. **Diddú og Blásarasextett Reykjavíkur.** The opera singer and the brass band. **Mugison – Mugimama is this monkey music.** The maestro from Ísafjörður's latest is just out.

Bad Taste: Jan Mayen: Home of the Free...Indeed. Their debut album is finally out.

Independent: Isidor: Betty Takes a Ride. The instrumental band finally found a singer and have made an album. **Stranger: Paint Peace.** The artist name of Hjörvar Hjörleifsson, country pop enthusiast. **Astara: Alright, Alright, Alright.** Will Astara's debut live up to its name?

Hestbak: The boys in Hestbak ride on. **Hoffman: Bad Seeds.** The Westman's finest make it ashore. **Pornopop:** ...and the slow songs about the dead calm in your arms. **Bacon: Krieg.** After a strong showing at Airwaves, Bacon has secured distribution from Sónet.

Hundslappadrifa: 10 Vetra. Interesting album from a band with an interesting name.

the album

MAUS

TÓNLYST '94-'04 / LYSTAUKAR '93-'04



It's been ten whole years since Maus burst onto the scene by winning Músíktilraunir (a local talent show for unsigned bands) and now, five critically acclaimed albums later, the band releases its first ever best of collection, featuring all the quintessential hits. There's also the obligatory new song as well as a bonus cd packed with remixes, live recordings and demos from the first decade of one of Iceland's most adored rock outfits.

Although they're hardly pioneers, the four members of the band are most certainly purveyors of good and honest music. Armed with a groovy rhythm section, catchy guitar riffs and some glorious hooks, Maus have also managed to thread the fine line between indie and pop, building a healthy fanbase along the way. A lot of the loyal fans will be delighted to have all their favorite Maus songs in one place while those still unfamiliar with any of the groups albums would do well to start with this one. The songs are also in chronological order which makes it easier to follow the progress of the band over this fruitful decade.

Despite enjoying success in their homeland, the band has never really launched itself onto the international scene. Releasing the latest album (Musick) in English appears to be a step in that direction although it was not a first for Maus. The second album (Ghostsongs) was also largely written in English before the members reverted to their native tongue for 'Lof mér að falla að þínu eyra', an album featuring Roger O'Donnell from Maus' favorite band, The Cure, on keyboards.

As for the bonus cd; it starts off with remixes from the likes of Quarashi and Cugus before reminding us how Maus sounded when we first heard them back in 1994 at the aforementioned Músíktilraunir. The cd, and indeed the first chapter in Maus' history, closes with eight demos that never made it through the final cut and a cover of 'Bás 12' by legendary punk group Peyr. When Maus finally call it a day we may refer to them as legendary too. But that might be a while, as none of it's members have even reached 30 yet, so they may still have some of their best years ahead of them.

Árni Viðar



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LISTINGS

Music and nightlife events usually start around 21:00, unless otherwise stated. Pubs close at 01:00 on weekdays and much, much later on weekends. For those just wanting to party, the pubs and clubs don't get crowded until after midnight on weekends, although Thursday is a semi-official night out.

FRIDAY

NOVEMBER 5

TPM Tónlistarþróunarmiðstöð: 19:00 Bands Hatesphere, Solistafi, I Adapt, Fighting Shit and Hyggjandi Samleikur Admission fee 1000ISK
Austurbær: 21:00 Band MAUS plays, see picks for details
Ari í Ögri: Acoustics
Café Rósenberg: Badgers Duo (UK)
Hressó: Band "Basic Souls" plays cover
Dubliners: Band Atómastöðin plays
Amsterdam: Band Buff plays covers
Pravda Club: DJ Atli & DJ Áki Pain
Kaffibarinn: DJ Benni
Thorvaldsen: DJ Daddi Disco
Café Victor: DJ Gunni
Kaffi List: DJ Shaft
Glaubar: Dj Stjáni



Tjarnarbró, November 5-13th

UNGLIST

The annual art festival for the young will kick off on Friday the 5th with a live rock concert, featuring bands such as Armaða and Hoffmann. Saturday is dedicated to fashion and Sunday evening offers a classical music event. The festival restarts on Wednesday with a dancing event, and among the many artists performing are the dancers from the Screensaver dance show. Thursday hosts an acting competition between schools in Reykjavík, and Friday and Saturday night both feature various kinds of music.

Sirkus: DJ Sunboj
Café Culture: DJ Tony
Sólón: DJ Þróstur 3000
Nelly 's: DJ's Gummi Gonzalez & Nonni 900
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Nasa: Popband "Sálin hans Jóns míns" plays for the first time in a year
Gaukur á Stöng: Stoner rock band Brain Police celebrate a release of their new album
Kofi Tómasar frænda: The house DJ plays a strange mix of hits

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 6

Háskólabíó: 18:00 Band Nýðönsk plays with the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra
TPM Tónlistarþróunarmiðstöð: 20:00 Girls Night Out! Women rockbands: Brúðarbandið, Viðurstyggð and I love money productions play tonight. Admission fee 500ISK
Hressó: 22:00 Band "Nimbus" plays covers
Ari í Ögri: Acoustics
Gaukur á Stöng: Band "Í Svörtum Fötum" plays covers



Austurbær, November 17th

THE FALL

The Fall, the legendary mainstay of Brit punk music for over 30 years, returns to Iceland on November 17th. Mark Smith fronts one of the most prolific and longest-living bands in the history of punk. So if you're feeling rowdy, doors open at Austurbær at 7:30. Vonbrigði and Dr. Gunní open. Tickets at kr.3200 available online at midi.is and Austurbær box office.



Austurbær, November 5th, 21:00

MAUS

The band MAUS celebrated their 11 years of existence by releasing a double album just last month. The album features all the best songs of their five previous album releases as well as a collection of remixes, live recordings and demos. They will be performing these songs live, some of them for the first time in years and some for the last time in years to come. (see also album of the month in this issue) Tickets are available in Skifan music stores. Admission 1500ISK

Dubliners: Band Atómastöðin plays
Amsterdam: Band Buff plays covers
Grand Rokk: Bands Hatesphere and Drep
Jón Forsetti: Cowboy night, dress up, go nuts
Pravda Club: DJ Atli & DJ Áki Pain
Thorvaldsen: DJ Daddi Disco
Kaffibarinn: DJ Gísli Galdur
Café Victor: DJ Gunni
Glaubar: DJ Magg
Café Culture: DJ Sammi from band "Jagúar"
Kaffi List: DJ Shaft
Sólón: DJ Þróstur 3000
Nelly 's: DJ's Gummi Gonzalez & Nonni 900
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Nasa: Popband "Sálin hans Jóns míns" plays for the first time in a year
Sirkus: The Fogs (Maggi Legó)
Kofi Tómasar frænda: The house DJ plays a strange mix of hits
Tjarnarbró: UNGLIST, see picks for details

SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 7

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Dubliners: Troubadour Ingvar Valgeirs
Tjarnarbró: UNGLIST, see picks for details
Café Rósenberg: Wine & Winter

MONDAY

NOVEMBER 8

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Café Culture: Jazz gíg, Eric Quik with a band
Gaukur á Stöng: Pool Tournament
Dubliners: Troubadour Ingvar Valgeirs

TUESDAY

NOVEMBER 9

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Dubliners: Troubadour Donny Osmond

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 10

Kaffibarinn: DJ's Páll Banine & Chuck
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Grand Rokk: Grand Jazz
Café Culture: Tango night
Dubliners: Troubadour Jimmy Osmond
Tjarnarbró: UNGLIST, see picks for details

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 11

Glaubar: 21:00 Coverband Kung Fu 23:00 DJ Stoner
Hressó: Band "Mát" plays covers
Gaukur á Stöng: Bands Ampop, Leaves and Bang Gang play
Grand Rokk: Bands: I adapt, Skátar and Hríðju-verk
Thorvaldsen: DJ Daddi Disco
Kaffibarinn: DJ Don Balli Funk
Sirkus: DJ Einar Sonic
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Sólón: Green Room Session: DJ Tommi White and Troubadours Máni & Sævar

Leikhúskjallarninn: indy band "Úlpa" plays
Café Culture: Live Music
Dubliners: Singer Ruth Reginalds
Café Rósenberg: South River Band
Tjarnarbró: UNGLIST, see picks for details

FRIDAY

NOVEMBER 12

Hressó: 22:00 Band "Mát" plays covers
01:00 DJ Heiðar Austmann
Café Culture: Band "Flug" plays
Dubliners: Band "Friends of Adolph" plays
Café Rósenberg: Band "Santiago" plays
Grand Rokk: Brain Police plays
Pravda Club: DJ Atli & DJ Áki Pain
Café Victor: DJ Gunni
Kaffi List: DJ Heiða
Thorvaldsen: DJ Hlynur Mastermex
Amsterdam: DJ Steini
Sólón: DJ Svalli
Glaubar: DJ Þór Bæring
Nelly 's: DJ's Gummi Gonzalez & Nonni 900
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Nasa: Partyzone: DJ's Don Grétar & Tommi White
Gaukur á Stöng: Sníglafrin motorcycle club holds their annual celebration, wear leather.
Studentakjallarninn: Stand up in english! Featuring Snorri Hergill, Taffeta wood & Eyvindur Karlsson
Kofi Tómasar frænda: The house DJ plays a strange mix of hits
Ari í Ögri: Troubadours Halli & Kalli
Tjarnarbró: UNGLIST, see picks for details

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 13

Dubliners: Band "Friends of Adolph" plays
Gaukur á Stöng: Band "Jet Black Joe" plays
Café Rósenberg: Band "Santiago" plays
Amsterdam: Band Buff plays covers
Grand Rokk: Bands playing: Jan Mayen and Solid IV
Pravda Club: DJ Atli & DJ Áki Pain
Kaffibarinn: DJ Ární E
Café Victor: DJ Gunni
Hressó: DJ Heiðar Austmann
Thorvaldsen: DJ Hlynur Mastermex
Kaffi List: DJ Páll Maus
Sólón: DJ Svalli
Café Culture: DJ Tony
Glaubar: DJ Þór Bæring
Nelly 's: DJ's Gummi Gonzalez & Nonni 900
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Nasa: Popband Nýðönsk plays
Kofi Tómasar frænda: The house DJ plays a strange mix of hits
Ari í Ögri: Troubadours Halli & Kalli
Tjarnarbró: UNGLIST, see picks for details

SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 14

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Gaukur á Stöng: Gaukur á Stöng celebrates its 21st birthday, beer & shot for 350ISK. Various bands playing.
Grand Rokk: Grand Rokk: Home of the Blues, see picks
Dubliners: Troubadour Skinny Domino

MONDAY

NOVEMBER 15

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Gaukur á Stöng: Gaukur á Stöng celebrates its 21st birthday, beer & shot for 350ISK. Various bands playing.
Dubliners: Troubadour Skinny Chucker

TUESDAY

NOVEMBER 16

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Gaukur á Stöng: Gaukur á Stöng celebrates its 21st birthday, beer & shot for 350ISK. Various bands playing.
Dubliners: Ruth Reginalds & Th Fitzgerald

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 17

Gaukur á Stöng: Band "Indigo" celebrates a release of a new album by performing tonight, opening for them is indie rock band "Úlpa"
Kaffibarinn: DJ's Ellen & Erna
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Dubliners: Ruth Reginalds & Th Fitzgerald
Café Culture: Tango Night

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 18

Glaubar: 21:00 Búðarbandið plays
23:00 DJ Stoner
Thorvaldsen: DJ Daddi Disco
Kaffibarinn: DJ Gísli Galdur
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Sólón: Green Room Session: DJ Tommi White and Troubadours Máni & Sævar
Café Culture: Live Music
Café Rósenberg: Mike Pollock plays the blues
Dubliners: Singer Ruth Reginalds
Hressó: Troubadour Eyjólfur Kristjánss plays his own material

FRIDAY

NOVEMBER 19

Gaukur á Stöng: 22:00 Bands "Kiss" & "Buff" play tonight, 02:00 DJ Master
Hressó: 23:00 Band "Brak" plays. 01:00 DJ Valdi
Dubliners: Band "Durex" plays covers
Café Culture: Band "One Eyed Lizard" plays
Pravda Club: DJ Atli & DJ Áki Pain
Thorvaldsen: DJ Daddi Disco
Café Victor: DJ Gunni
Glaubar: DJ Stjáni
Kaffibarinn: DJ Þórhallur
Sólón: DJ Þróstur 3000
Nelly 's: DJ's Gummi Gonzalez & Nonni 900
Grand Rokk: Exos
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Amsterdam: Live coverband
Kofi Tómasar frænda: The house DJ plays a strange mix of hits
Ari í Ögri: Acoustics

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 20

Hressó: 23:00 Band "Brak" plays
01:00 DJ Valdi
Dubliners: Band "Durex" plays covers
Café Rósenberg: Band "One Eyed Lizard" plays
Gaukur á Stöng: Band "Skítamóráll" plays covers
Grand Rokk: Band Hundslappadriða plays
Pravda Club: DJ Atli & DJ Áki Pain
Café Culture: DJ Bobby K
Thorvaldsen: DJ Daddi Disco
Café Victor: DJ Gunni
Kaffibarinn: DJ Maggi Legó
Sólón: DJ Þróstur 3000
Nelly 's: DJ's Gummi Gonzalez & Nonni 900
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Nasa: Funkband Jagúar plays
Amsterdam: Live coverband
Kofi Tómasar frænda: The house DJ plays a strange mix of hits
Ari í Ögri: Acoustics

SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 21

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Dubliners: Troubadour Andy Garcia
Ari í Ögri: Acoustics

MONDAY

NOVEMBER 22

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Dubliners: Troubadour Andy Garcia
Ari í Ögri: Acoustics

TUESDAY

NOVEMBER 23

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Dubliners: Troubadour Th. Fitzgerald
Ari í Ögri: Acoustics



Gaukur á Stöng, Desember 1st

FREE PALESTINE

Free Palestine hosts a CD release concert for their upcoming compilation of Icelandic musicians at Gaukur á Stöng. Doors open at 9:00, kr.500 at the door or kr.2000 with the CD. The lineup is as yet undecided but will probably include performances by Múm, Mugison, Gus Gus, Tenderfoot, Leaves, Quarashi, Vinyl, KK, 200,000 Naglbitar, Ghostigal and Ensími among others. For further details see www.gaukurinn.is.

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 24

Kaffibarinn: DJ Rósa
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Gaukur á Stöng: Jimi Hendrix tribute night, see picks for details
Café Culture: Tango Night
Dubliners: Troubadour Th. Fitzgerald
Ari í Ögri: Acoustics

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 25

Glaubar: 21:00 Coverband Kung Fu
23:00 DJ Stoner
Grand Rokk: Crime Jazz

Kaffibarinn: DJ Benni
Thorvaldsen: DJ Daddi Disco
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Sólón: Green Room Session: DJ Tommi White and Troubadours Máni & Sævar
Gaukur á Stöng: Jimi Hendrix tribute night, see picks for details
Café Culture: Live Music
Dubliners: Ritso
Café Rósenberg: Seth Sharp sings
Hressó: Troubadour Halli
Ari í Ögri: Acoustics

FRIDAY

NOVEMBER 26

Dubliners: Band "Athens" plays covers
Grand Rokk: Bands: Botleðja & 200.000 Naglbitar play
Nasa: Coverband Quenn plays
Pravda Club: DJ Atli & DJ Áki Pain
Kaffibarinn: DJ Ární E
Café Victor: DJ Gunni
Hressó: DJ Heiðar Austmann
Thorvaldsen: DJ Hlynur Mastermex
Café Culture: DJ Kristín
Amsterdam: DJ Steini
Sólón: DJ Svalli
Glaubar: DJ Þór Bæring
Nelly 's: DJ's Gummi Gonzalez & Nonni 900
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Gaukur á Stöng: Hip Hop night, more information later
Kofi Tómasar frænda: The house DJ plays a strange mix of hits
Ari í Ögri: Troubadours Halli & Kalli. Acoustics.

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 27

Dubliners: Band "Athens" plays covers
Gaukur á Stöng: Band Buff and DJ Master
Amsterdam: Band FLUG plays covers
Grand Rokk: Band Let it Burn (US) plays
Pravda Club: DJ Atli & DJ Áki Pain
Kaffibarinn: DJ Gísli Galdur
Café Victor: DJ Gunni
Hressó: DJ Heiðar Austmann
Thorvaldsen: DJ Hlynur Mastermex
Café Culture: DJ Kristín
Glaubar: DJ Svalli
Sólón: DJ Þór Bæring
Nelly 's: DJ's Gummi Gonzalez & Nonni 900
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Kofi Tómasar frænda: The house DJ plays a strange mix of hits
Ari í Ögri: Troubadours Halli & Kalli. Acoustics.

SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 28

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Dubliners: Troubadour Ingvar Valgeirs

MONDAY

NOVEMBER 29

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Dubliners: Troubadour Ingvar Valgeirs

TUESDAY

NOVEMBER 30

De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Dubliners: Tónava

WEDNESDAY

DECEMBER 1

Café Rósenberg: Bill Bourne plays
De Palace: Fuck Airwaves Festival: 38 bands playing
Café Culture: Tango Night

MUSIC AND NIGHTLIFE



LOCALS ROCK AIRWAVES, Despite the Imports

by Bart Cameron

When I saw Keane, The Stills and The Shins on the lineup for this year's Airwaves festival, I expected the worst. The Iceland Airwaves Festival would be an innocuous gathering of bands you put on an iPod because they don't disrupt the flow. (Or bands you listen to at work because you don't like silence, but you don't want to be distracted.)

I thought this was the year Mr. Destiny would prove it is nothing but sell-out corporate crap. I was wrong. Not because the foreign bands somehow found soul or meaning—I still insist they suck (MTV and Rolling Stone magazine disagree, by the way, which may prove my point), but because the Icelandic bands showcased at Airwaves put on great shows. Most put on not just their best shows of the year, but career bests. Even better, few of these career bests will result in the bands selling out. When you put crap like The Stills on your program, you attract journalists who don't know great music if it slaps them repeatedly in the face and then, Egil-like, vomits on them. So Icelanders put on a great show for Icelanders, while foreign journalists looked a little confused.

Bands most in danger of "making it":
Mugison, Þórir and Trabant

In the most charismatic performance I've



seen...possibly ever, Mugison joked that this was his "make" show. He may have been right, though his show focused so much on his personality, and was so charming, that he was labeled by one English journalist I talked to as "a great performer, but not for radio." My god, there is such a thing as being too good.



Mr. Destiny showed genuine savvy in giving the two best time slots of the festival to the Icelandic performers who could best stun everybody. Wednesday night, 19-year old prodigy Þórir performed in front of a fresh-faced and sober audience and gave them beautifully crafted verses and pitch-perfect phrasing. Very quietly, Þórir has proven himself to be the most exciting Icelandic find since Sigur Rós (It's no coincidence, by the way, that he stands out so much and is so good

when he sounds so different from the popular Icelandic band). Foreign journalists did pick up on this young singer. He is the musician I am most afraid may get dragged out of Iceland by Clear Channel or some other media giant.

Trabant also performed a "make" show. Grapevine has devoted three articles to the band so far, but their performance on the last night of Airwaves demonstrated that we weren't giving them enough coverage. No bother, you'll see them everywhere else now. Honestly, had Mr. Destiny booked a chimp with an accordion for the rest of the festival, Trabrant's closing number would still have allowed every person who forked out over 5000 ISK to admit they got their money's worth.

Why don't they play like this every week?

...but no chimps with accordions

Of course, the other bands weren't chimps with accordions. The great surprise was that you could go to the smaller venues, away from the crowds, and catch the lesser-known local bands put on great sets.

On Thursday night, Bacon rocked through a bluesy interpretation of their new material. An absolute stunner, it was the kind of opening to the evening that makes you feel very bad for any band following. Any band but Funk Harmony Park, who are not funky and employ no harmony, and are not even a park. Steinyrggur and Ghostigital came on and played rousing sets.

The same night, I Adapt and Úlpa played strong shows. To explain my disappointment in the Slowblow performance, I will refer to ultra-hip music online magazine Pitchfork's review. They claim the band "ditches their peers' electro/acoustic textures in favor of detachedly strummed acoustic guitars." A good point, except Slowblow showed up with Múm playing the electro/acoustic textures that sound so familiar. And frontman Dagur gave the impression that he would rather be behind a camera than on a stage.

Hjálmar and Hot Chip played rousing sets at NASA the next night. But those not so interested in dance music caught extraordinary

live shows by Æla, Skátar, Kímono and Dr. Spock. If these four bands to continue to play shows like that all winter, it's entirely possible that fewer locals will sink into alcoholic depression.

Will Sirkus ever be the same?

The final night brought Maus, Mugison, Trabant and Gus Gus: four bands that are always good live bands, but that were particularly on that night (Gus Gus' canny use of poultry allowed them to cope with having to follow the best show of the year.)

Saturday also brought the soap opera of Airwaves. After another frustrating experience with their American label, four members of Singapore Sling decided they had enough during the CMJ festival. Frontman Henrik Björnson returned to Iceland three days before his Airwaves gig with no band. He and guitarist Einar scraped one together, including previously mentioned prodigy Þórir on drums. Members of Múm and Hudson Wayne were also involved.

The Sling show brought with it an edgy nervous energy, like we were watching people cross a picket line. Henrik opened saying "We're still Singapore Sling," and got a few "No you're not" responses from an impatient crowd. The look of the band wasn't as uniform as it has been, perhaps not as cool. But the sound was good, the band tight. In fact, with Þórir pounding holy hell out of the bass drum, Sling sounded more driving and organic, less a wall of noise. Even the reluctant crowd had to concede it was a good show.

To kick the drama up a notch, Toggi, who had been Sling's bassist three days earlier, joined Gus Gus on stage that night. "With Gus Gus, the Funerals and Singapore Sling fighting like this, I don't feel comfortable going to Sirkus," a local quipped. People who enjoy The Stills, The Shins and Keane all insisted these headlining bands played good shows. I asked how this was possible. "I knew all their songs, they played them perfectly, and they had a lot of energy," I was told. I had to be told. I had fallen asleep during The Stills show.

"There simply has to be a song in the world called 'Brad Pitt'"

Gísli of Bacon speaks about his look-alike

By Klas Molde

W Listening to Bacon, a new project by the duo Gísli Már Sigurjónsson and Guðmundur Kristjánsson, is certainly a mixed experience. Songs might start out as hard-hitting dance floor material, but often end with something completely different. On their debut mini album "Krieg", which is the first part of an ongoing trilogy, they've managed to fit everything from furious breakcore to sleazy jazz. I met Gísli to try to clear things up a bit.

Meeting me between work and rehearsals, Gísli seems a busy man these days. He tells me that he doesn't intend to sleep until the third album of the trilogy has been completed, and about the importance of everyone being perfectly synchronised before playing live. I ask Gísli if it's not hard to perform such computer based music live and make something dynamic out of it.

"Well, live we don't use any computers or sequenced stuff whatsoever. We're actually a full band when performing, a rock band making covers of Bacon songs. That's why we're called Bacon Live Support Unit and not just Bacon. All the beats and samples on the album are replaced or recreated with proper instruments for a better show. But there are actually quite a few acoustic elements in our music, even on record. For example, I have a friend from the symphony orchestra playing double bass on one of the tracks."

Inquiring about the rather curious titles of the songs, Gísli says, "It's usually just the sound and look of a word that appeals to us. Some titles are obvious though; I mean there simply has to be a song in the world named 'Brad Pitt'. Possibly, things will become clearer once the trilogy is completed. We put a lot into the trilogy thing."

There are quite a lot of different styles and approaches to be found on your album – you guys must have a rather diverse taste in music...

"I guess that comes from having been into music for such a long time. When I was confirmed I got a guitar and an amplifier and music has been my life ever since. The same goes for many of my friends – whatever they got for their confirmation has played a large role in what they've been doing since. I guess that's one of the few good things that come out of religion. However, it's only as of late that I've been making electronic music – I used to be more into hard rock, and Gu mundur into industrial music. Nowadays we try not to limit ourselves. Everything we've been listening to and everything that's happening to us in our daily lives is a potential source of inspiration; whatever we do we're always rehearsing for Bacon."







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Passing by the huge windows of gallery i8, strangers get stunned by the three juicy angels with big décolletés and hot legs on a screen, and slow their pace to watch. The female angels start kissing each other like three Botticelli Muses, "longer than a friend's kiss and shorter than a lover's kiss" they call it.

By Kremena K.N.F.

THE LOVE CORPORATION

Longer Than a Friend's Kiss but Shorter than a Lover's

Just as one begins to think that this is the ultimate male dream, the camera begins to show uncomfortably close-ups of their facial skin. The tension is increased when they start cutting their wings, generously splashing blood on the white outfit. At the end the scene is celebrated with a shower of champagne. "Love conquers everything!". As much as I don't like the word "feminism", because today it rather brings negative connotations of extremism, I couldn't help being charmed by the genuineness of those girls. Their work shows sensitivity, confidence and pride in being a woman. One of the reasons why I came to Iceland is because of the legend of how strong and independent the women from the North are, a paradise for feminists. My very first lesson in the Icelandic language was a story from "Laxdæla" about Guðrún mistreating her husbands. Immediately I associated "love corporation" with female revolutionaries. Being one myself, I called my foreign comrades Sigrún and Jóni for an interview (the third one lives in Berlin). On Sunday morning I had a bad feeling that no Iclander gets up early after a heavy weekend, but Sigrún showed up. It turned out that Jóni had had a "bachelorette party" the previous night, attended by among others Sigrún. I felt bad for dragging her out of bed.

Q: - So what did you do?

A: - Oh, it was great. We were only girls, and we went to Kramhúsið, where Jóni danced really beautifully.

Q: - Why do you call yourselves The Love Corporation in English, while your Icelandic name means something else ("gjörningur" = "a happening or performance"), according to the dictionary)?

A: - Actually it means "performance club", like a

"knitting club", which is a popular Icelandic expression for women gathering together over gossip and exchanging recipes. Traditionally in such male clubs-golf, bridge, whatever clubs, the access of women is strictly prohibited, and during leisure-time serious business is often discussed there as well. So, why not a knitting club? It could be pretty serious business, too.

Q: I read somewhere, that you do performances because you hate it - "the most pretentious art form of all", right? And you do a lot of poetic (sentimental) slogans. I am big fan of manifestos - reminds me of the modernistic "ism" schools being formed between First and Second World War. Are you serious about your hatred of performance?

A: Yes, we hate performances. Today you can not say such stuff without sounding naive and silly, because we all know that those ideas you mentioned didn't work at the end. So, we are self-ironic, in a way. But it doesn't hurt believing in them. It's about loving life in joy and sorrow. You won't change the world, but hope keeps you moving ahead.

Q: - All of you lived and studied abroad. The other girls were exchange students in Copenhagen, and you worked in New York. Weren't you tempted to stay in the big world beyond the ocean? It seems to me that Icelanders who live abroad always come home in about 10 years. What explains this Icelandic phenomenon?

A: - I followed my boyfriend for 12 years, (my husband today), who was studying there; he is a movie-maker. I also went to school there, but I quit- it was way too expensive. I kept doing illegal jobs, and it was tiring. I didn't have freedom to do what I want because of the visa-restrictions. Now I wouldn't go back. Things in the States worry me. And I was terribly homesick.

Q: - How do you manage to work as a team? There are always leaders and passive people and normally the leaders are the ones with confidence, while the silent people are the ones with knowledge.

A: - We all contribute with something. At the end the product is something which individually nobody would have come up with alone.

The Love Corporation's exhibition opens on the 12th of November in the National Art Gallery (Listasafn Íslands).

LISTINGS

Want to be seen in the listings? Send us a mail to listings@grapevine.is and your event will be announced in the next issue, and the best thing is that being in the listings is free!

The National Museum of Iceland

New permanent exhibitions, giving a comprehensive picture of Iceland's cultural history through the ages to the present day. The exhibitions will cover 2000 m2 and be an exciting journey through time.

Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum

10:00-17:00 every day
Textile art, Northern Fibre V: An international exhibition in the field of textile arts, a joint project of the Museum and the Icelandic Textile Association, with nomination of artists coming from a number of countries, in addition to Icelandic artists. Ravilious: Imagined Realities: Eric Ravilious was a well known British artist working in watercolour, graphic arts, ceramics, design etc. in the 1920s and '30s. He was also one of the best known British "War Artists" of the Second World War. And Works from the Kjarval Collection also at Kjarvalsstaðir ends November 10.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum

Sat and Sun 14:00-17:00
A Slice of the Moon: Travelling exhibition with sculptures and reliefs by the Greenlandic artist Ise Hessner.

Gerðuberg Cultural Center

Mon-Fri 11:00-19:00, Sat-Sun 13:00-17:00.
Landscape architect Reynir Vilhjálmsson - Seminar and retrospective: The seminar is in Icelandic. The retrospective exhibition contains drawings and photographs. Ends 14nov. Exhibition by Guðrún B. Helgadóttir, starts 5 nov. Exhibition "this is what children want to see", Children's book illustrations, starts 20 nov.

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

Mon-Fri 10:00-18:00, Sat 10:00-16:00
FIT 50 Years Anniversary - Retrospective Anniversary exhibition of FIT (Association of Icelandic Graphic Designers) that will present a retrospective of the development of graphic design in Iceland. The Erró Collection - Scapes: An exhibition of works from private collections and from the Erró Collection, where the Museum continues to present the various emphasis and chapters in the artistic creation of Erró.

ASÍ museum

Tue-Sun 14:00-18:00
Exhibitions by Guðjón Ketilsson and also by Kolbrún S. Kjarval ends November 7. Ásmundarsalur Erling P.V. Klingenberg and David Diviney "Rap", Disney explored. Also Sara Björnsdóttir video installation.

Nýlistasafn, The Living Art Museum

Grassroot #5, show by 13 young artworkers, the show is in two places. The living art museum and Reykjavík energy company. Ends 13 nov. Also Nika Radic will be showing the work Journal developed during her stay in Reykjavík and her two earlier videos.

Kirsuberjatréd

A gallery with Icelandic design run by ten female artists.

Gerðarsafn, Kópavogur Art Gallery

Tue-Sun 11:00-17:00.
In bloom / En clem: Spanish modern art. The

purpose of the exhibition is to unveil how art has evolved in various places in Spain since 1948.

Nordic House

Mon-Fri 8:00-17:00, Sat&Sun 12:00-17:00
Exhibition Wintermass. Young Icelandic artists.

Gallery i8

Wed-Fri 11:00-17:00, 13:00-17:00 Sat.
Exhibition by Kristján Guðmundsson "Arkitektur".

National Gallery of Iceland

11:00-17:00 every day
Exhibition "Art under fourty". Art of the generation under forty?

Gallery of the Icelandic printmakers association

Tue-Sun 14:00-18:00
Exhibition by Pjetur Stefánsson, starts 6 nov. Other exhibition "Icelandic Graphic" starts 27 nov.

Kling og Bang Gallery

Thu-Sun 14:00-18:00
Exhibition by Jonas Ohlsson "Visual Viking Blood Reunion Tour While Sound of Music...Come!" Other exhibition by Sigurður Guðjónsson starts 27 nov.

Hafnarborg Art Gallery

Wed-Sun 12:00-17:00
Exhibition "Beyond reality" photography by Izabela Jaroszewska and Jóna Þorvaldsdóttir. An exhibition "Icelandic horse", where the theme is the Icelandic horse in Icelandic paintings.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Mon-Fri 12:00-19:00, Sat&Sun 13:00-17:00.
Exhibition "Before and after".

Klink og bank artist workplace

Workplace for artist, open when something special is going on.

Culture House

11:00-17:00 every day
Few exhibitions: "Medieval Manuscripts Eddas and Sagas", many of Iceland's national treasures are on display in the Culture House's featured exhibition Medieval Manuscripts - Eddas and Sagas.

"The National Museum - as it was" The exhibition celebrates the National Museum's 140th anniversary in 2003. Exhibition "Home Rule 1904".

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum

Winter: Guided tours scheduled on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 13:00. Guided tours for groups by arrangement.

Gallery smíðar og skart

Sun-Fri 10:00-18:00, Sat: 10:00-16:00
Selection of fine art, both functional and sculptural. Ceramics, paintings and graphics.

Gallery Kolbrún S. Kjarval

Uniquely designed, hand-made ceramics.

Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum

13:00-18:00 every day
The Man and Material. A retrospective exhibition of works by Ásmundur Sveinsson.

Telecommunications Museum

Tue, Thu&Sun 11:00-17:00
Pictures and items related to the history of telecommunications.

Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum

Tue-Sun 14:00-17:00
Works of Einar Jónsson, Iceland's first sculptor. Changes in opening hours around 16 sept. Open only Sat-Sun 14:00-17:00.

Icelandic Institute of Natural History

Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun 13:00-17:00
Geological, botanical and zoological exhibits, displaying the nature of Iceland.

Saga Museum

10:00-16:00 every day,
The Saga museum intimately recreates key mo-

ments in Icelandic history and gives a compelling view into how Icelanders have lived and thought for more than a millennium through the use of life size

Ilknesses.

Reykjavík City Library

Mon-Fri 10:00-16:00
Books and periodicals in Icelandic as well as English, Scandinavian and other languages. Also has a childrens and a comic book section.

Handverk og Hönnun

Mon-Fri 09:00-16:00
Craft and design. Craftspeople transfer - in modern and dynamic ways - nature's shapes, colours and materials to their work.

Gallery Meistarar Jakob

Mon-Fri 11:00-18:00, Sat 11:00-14:00
The gallery is run by eleven artists who work in ceramics, textiles, printmaking and paintings and you will always find one of them at the gallery.

Gallery Tukt

Mon-Thu 13:00-18:00, Fri 13:00 - 17:00
Various artists.

Safn

Wed-Fri 14:00-18:00, Sat&Sun 14:00-17:00
The works were the artists' most current works at the time of the museums purchase. The artists in Safn include: Donald Judd, On Kawara, Karin Sande, Lawrence Weiner, Dan Flavin, and Dieter Roth. Guest artist, Birgir Andrésón, starts 6 nov.

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 11
Nordic House
Exhibition Wintermass opens.

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 13
Broadway Entertainment Hall
Le Sing" is the show where actors, artists and dancers are entertainers and waiters.

SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 14
Hafnarborg Art Gallery
Classical music by candlelight: The Reykjavík Trio plays music by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and others in Hafnarborg.

TUESDAY

NOVEMBER 16
Salurinn
Hljómblík: Music by Björgvin Guðmundsson from a newly published CD called Hljómblík.

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 17
Salurinn

The Icelandic Dance Company dance piece, it's called Screensaver.

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

Curator Gallery Talk: Curator Ólaf K. Sigurðardóttir leads a tour of the exhibition. In Icelandic.

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 11
Nordic House
Exhibition Wintermass opens.

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 13
Broadway Entertainment Hall
Le Sing" is the show where actors, artists and dancers are entertainers and waiters.

SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 14
Hafnarborg Art Gallery
Classical music by candlelight: The Reykjavík Trio plays music by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and others in Hafnarborg.

TUESDAY

NOVEMBER 16
Salurinn
Hljómblík: Music by Björgvin Guðmundsson from a newly published CD called Hljómblík.

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 17
Salurinn

Guðrún Gunnarsdóttir, music by Valgeir Skaggfjörð from a newly published CD.

FRIDAY

NOVEMBER 19
Salurinn
Hörður Torfason: Music by and performed by the Icelandic trubador Hörður Torfason.

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 20
Broadway Entertainment Hall
Le Sing" is the show where actors, artists and dancers are entertainers and waiters.

SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 21
Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum
Lecture: Guðmundur Oddur Magnússon, professor at the Iceland Academy of Art gives a talk on the history of graphic design in Iceland. The lecture is based on an essay published in the exhibition catalogue. In Icelandic.

THURSDAY

NOVEMBER 25
Broadway Entertainment Hall
Friends of India - charity concert: Performers all wellknown Icelandic artists

WEDNESDAY

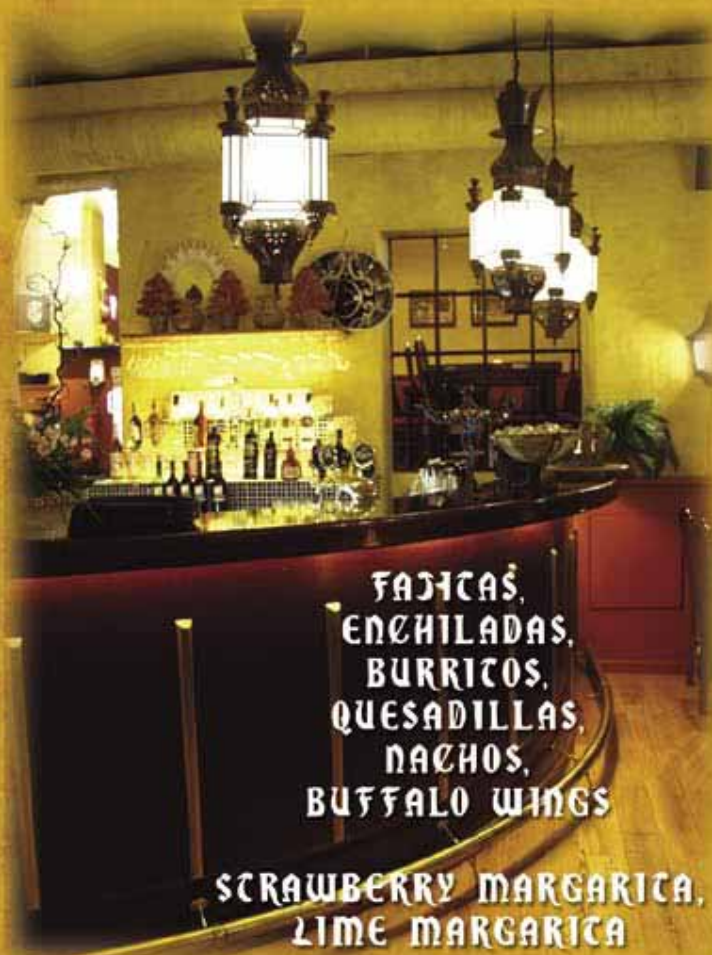
DECEMBER 1
Salurinn
Tíbra: Songs by Atli Heimir Sveinsson, Performers all wellknown Icelandic musicians.



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SHAMELESS SELF PROMOTION

THE FOGHORNS

by Bart Cameron

Of bands showcasing original music with tight harmonicas, honky tonk acoustic guitar, and raucous bucket playing in the 101 area of Reykjavík, The Foghorns are at least in the top twenty. The Grapevine caught up with Bart, singer for The Foghorns, during a recent gig at Hressingarskálinn. In a spat of fantastically irresponsible journalism and performing, the interview took place entirely inside the singer's head between the first and second verse of "So Sober."

Grapevine: Has playing in a local band always on the lookout for gigs and fans compromised your position as an underground music critic?

Bart: No. Bands that don't like my reviews can now assault me whilst I play. Bands that do like my reviews have no use for me. I am like a cheap whore in that regard.

GV: You're saying you've never used your journalistic credibility to get free publicity?

Bart: There's this. This should take care of any credibility I earned. I could have told the Grapevine to send someone to interview me, but I believe they are afraid of me. (I fear no man! -ed.) I threatened to take a dump on the editor's desk. (or his feces -ed.) I also said the editor's hero Michael Pollock tends to ramble. And I think I may have stated that Sigur Rós were the worst interview in the world. I can't believe they still let me write after I said Minus outclassed Metallica.

GV: What is your ideal audience?



Bart: My ideal audience wears shirts and Brooks Brothers jackets with skulls on them and shivers from the cold. No, sorry that's my ideal audience in hell. An ideal is an audience that likes songs but doesn't discuss top ten lists or bands they hate. I'd also prefer people who listen to whole CDs instead pressing shuffle on their iPods and then claiming their iPod has a personality.

GV: Two easy targets: Dead clothing and iPods. Maybe you should write for DV?

Bart: True. I also mocked my childhood heroes The Violent Femmes for saying they were from New York, but I always introduce myself as from Brooklyn. Even though the Femmes and I are from Racine, Wisconsin.

GV: Describe your music.

Bart: The Foghorns are playing guitar and bucket music influenced by Hank Williams and early bluesmen like Blind Lemon Jefferson.

GV: So you somehow skipped the last thirty years of music. How authentic.

Bart: No. I listened to older artists because Bob Dylan and Lou Reed mentioned them. But I play like old musicians because I don't have money or equipment or skill to sound like Dylan when he had a band. And Dylan is too familiar. I'd rather rip off his influences.

GV: Your lyrics all seem to be about failed relationships.

Bart: That's only if you listen to the words. A lot of people see me playing guitar and harmonica and think I'm singing protest songs. "I'm a filthy old man you date 'cause you got nothing better to do" can be read a few different ways, I guess.

GV: Why should anyone see a Foghorns show?

Bart: The bucket. Bucket plays a mean bucket. Also there's a possibility that one of the people I interviewed may beat me to a pulp or otherwise humiliate me. I've also been electrocuted on stage. Many Icelanders found this amusing. I also sing songs I believe in, songs that are open and about parts of life you usually don't hear out loud.

THE ICELANDIC COMEDY

by Eyvindur Karlsson

There are a lot of funny people in Iceland. I happen to be one of them, so I decided to interview myself. Knowing what a charming, funny, intelligent person I am, I was anticipating a nice, interesting chat when I met with me in my modest but comfortable apartment in downtown Reykjavík.

E: Good afternoon Eyvindur.

M: Hello myself.

E: How long have I been doing stand-up comedy?

M: Professionally for about four months, but I've been doing a few bits here and there for years.

E: What's the Icelandic comedy circuit like?

M: Well... There isn't one. That's the only real answer to that question. There's no real "comedy circuit", and in fact it's not very easy at all for young comedians to get started, because there are no clubs

that book comedians.

E: So what can aspiring comedians do?

M: There are a few comedy clubs run by individuals, not by establishments. I'm in charge of one of them and my good friend (and also a very funny guy) Snorri Hergill is in charge of another. This format is a good one because there's no financial risk involved for us, and obviously not for the establishment. We simply arrange for comedians to perform at some club that will lend us the room for the night. The drawback is



that this obviously doesn't pay very well, but it does have the advantage of getting young comics that are just starting out some exposure. This is how I got started, and I'm starting to make a modest amount of money out of comedy, so it should work for others as well.

E: Why is the comedy market so limited that the comics have to start their own clubs to hire themselves?

M: That's a good question Eyvindur...
E: Thanks.

M:...I think the simplest answer I can give you is that stand-up comedy is a really young artform in Iceland. When Eddie Izzard visited Iceland in 1995, stand-up was pretty much unknown to the majority of people here. There was no shortage of comedians, but they mostly did revue stuff, quite often in pairs. For a single person to go up on stage and just talk and make people laugh was all but unheard of. So I think Icelanders are still growing

accustomed to the art of stand-up comedy.

E: Have any Icelandic comics made their way to the international comedy scene?

M: No, not yet, but I know Snorri Hergill has performed a bit in London and is hopefully going there again next year. So we never know.

E: One last question: Is there any way for our international readers to take in the Icelandic comedy scene, albeit limited?

M: I'm glad I asked me that, because my comedy club is in fact hosting an evening of Icelandic stand-up comedians performing in English on Thursday, November 11th at Leikhúskjallarinn below the National Theatre, along with Snorri Hergill and Jón Haukdal. You can see more information on the web at <http://www.uppistand.net>.

E: Thanks for the chat.

M: Me too...



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BRING ON THE ELVES: TAKING ICELAND TO PARIS

by Davíð Stefánsson

Anxious as I was – as always happens when entering the Leifur Eiríksson Airport – I was oblivious to the fact that I was surrounded by endless rows of Icelandic artists from all cultural circles. It only just hit me when I entered the plane and got the economy-class overview of my co-passengers. Apparently, they were all going to take part in The Icelandic Culture Festival in Paris. I felt rather silly – being a poet, it's an occupational hazard – since I was the only artist on the plane who was not destined for immediate cultural greatness in the pop culture capital of the world.

Ha? I didn't even know about the Festival. How come? Rejection and self-doubt ran through my veins. Was I not artist enough?

I had to order myself a dwarfsized bottle of Breakfast-Chardonnay to bump into her on the sidewalk or in the nail-department at BYKO or we share hot water with her at the swimming-pool and actually think nothing of it. Yet, there I was, heart bouncing, palms sweating, just from the thought that maybe she would make a surprise appearance. Special circumstances change our perceptions and expectations. I was starstruck. But it was not Björk. It was a prominent, Icelandic female dancer. She was great. But she was not Björk.

A ministers' tomboy eloquence

Sparks flew. The Chardonnay did the trick, so I was able to mingle a bit – free from resentment – with my co-passengers, a few of whom I incidentally knew. The events were diverse and fairly contemporary (meaning it was not all about Vikings and elves and ghosts), there were exciting exhibitions of paintings, photographs and installations, and above all, there were concerts including bands like Múm and Mugison, and the notorious piece Hrafnagaldur Óðins by Sigur Rós. On the other hand, all the poets representing Icelandic literature

were between 50 and 80 years old. I wonder why that is? Would we send Brimkló or Rúnar Júlíusson to represent the Icelandic music scene in the year 2004?

We arrived in Paris at noon and went straight to my girlfriends cousins house. Within a minute the welcoming warm cousin (pure Icelandic hospitality) had invited us to attend the Grand Opening of Islande, de glace et de feu – Iceland, Ice and Fire Culture Festival that same night. Of course.

To cut it short: It was great fun! We can't afford to pay our kids' teachers decent salary, but what the moo. My talent for mass-counting is not great, but I would guess that 500 people attended the ceremony.

It went on roughly like this: Halldór Ásgrímsson, our new Prime Minister, held a speech. His speech was then translated into French. The French Prime Minister followed with his speech, which was then translated into Icelandic. Our Minister of Culture, Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir, held a speech with her unique tomboy eloquence. Her speech was then translated into French. And the French Minister of Culture (of course) held his mandatory speech, which was (of

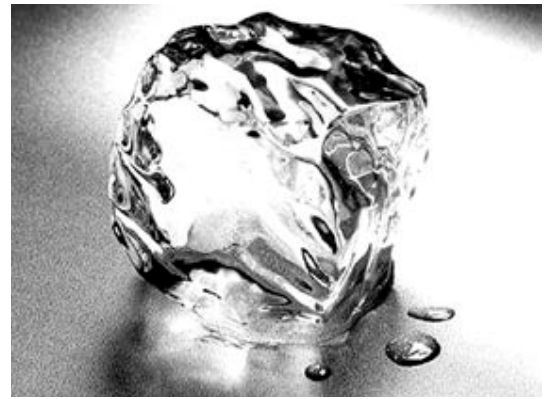
course) translated into Icelandic.

But is it Björk?

Luckily, someone had provided ample champagne for 500 thirsty faces. The golden bubbly lasted all night long, even though the night was to get quite long.

So, when I heard our Prime Minister utter the following statement: "What the French and the Icelandic have in common is that both nations are proud of their history and culture..." I was able to shake my head in a friendly manner, sip the gold and think to myself that I was at least lucky to have a distraction from this verbal violence.

So, inebriated on free champagne, mingling amongst The Icelandic Culture Elite (which was not mingling with me, but with The Icelandic Banking, Telephoning, Decoding, Drug-Producing and Funding Elite) I got the opportunity to watch a world preview of Björk's latest video on a giant screen. It's the one with all the silver bells fastened to her and the kids hopping on the black beaches of Iceland with the blue horizon in the background. It was great, and everyone was in genuine awe, and when the video ended some lights started flickering



on the other side of the room, the audience turned, and then some abstract movement, and...oh... someone started singing, and for a moment I thought: "Is she here, is she really here?"

I think everyone else thought something similar. Björk is not a novelty to the Icelandic people. We bump into her on the sidewalk or in the nail-department at BYKO or we share hot water with her at the swimming-pool and actually think nothing of it. Yet, there I was, heart bouncing, palms sweating, just from the thought that maybe she would make a surprise appearance. Special circumstances change our perceptions and expectations. I was starstruck. But it was not Björk. It was a prominent, Icelandic female dancer. She was great. But she was not Björk.

Bring on the elves

When our nations rhyming-master, Steindór Anderson, had uttered a few of his rhymes, the actual show on Icelandic nature was opened to the attending crowd. The show was everything we should never try to put into a show. It was artificial Icelandic landscape, trying to capture the softness of Icelandic

moss, the hardness of Icelandic lava, the mystic feeling of Icelandic fog, and the stinging brightness of the stars above on an extra dark, Icelandic winter night. All this was cramped into one large hall, and there were televised images of the crazy-orange of actual volcanoes erupting. And in this hall I found the ever so inevitable appearance of elves! They had to be somewhere, hadn't they? The elves were very capable French actors dressed in thin, white, elf-like rags using television and dramatic vocal expression to explain the wonders of Iceland to the locals.

I didn't want to be associated with this presentation of my country. Would the French present France with an artificial reconstruction of its typical country-side morning fog? Would the Italians present Italy by reproducing the feel of Tuscany hillsides?

What do we need to prove? That our nature is unique? Everyone knows this. That's why I love the ads from the clothing company 66 degrees North. They represent grim faces of normal Icelandic people in natural, dark, grey, weathery backgrounds. Iceland is grey. But the Icelandic grey is deep, mystical and beautiful.

Should Critics Have Their Own Witness Protection Program?

by Brian FitzGibbon

Why is it that critics have never been a particularly popular breed? There's that moment in Beckett's Waiting for Godot when Vladimir and Estragon are so bored that they start trading insults in a vain attempt to pass the time. "That's the idea," Estragon exclaims enthusiastically, "let's abuse each other!" So the two tramps start calling each other every name under the sun, from a moron to a vermin, abortion, morpion, curate, sewer-rat, and cretin until Estragon deals the deadliest blow of them all:

"CRITIC!" he growls. Vladimir is completely thrown. How can he possibly top that? "Oh," he says, falling into a defeated silence.

Why are critics so despised?

It's a moment that must have caused quite a laugh on that opening night back in Paris in 1954. You can picture those French critics sportily chucking in the audience, before nervously recoiling into the darkness of their seats. Poor critics, why are they so despised? Well, the answer to that question that is they're not always, of course. In fact, to the vast majority of the public who like to be told what movies or plays they should or shouldn't go to see, they are a guiding light. And unless they're being praised, it's really only the artists themselves—the authors, directors, and actors directly in the line of fire—who loathe them. Or at least feel threatened by them. And it's hardly surprising; a bad notice from the notorious Broadway critics of yore could sometimes close a show down overnight, and even

though they may not quite wield the same power today, there's still no denying that while people do not always like a play or a movie because they are told that it's good, they'll often stay away from one if they are told that it's bad. So yes, critics can, and often have, caused pain. But a good one, we are told, lives beyond these personal concerns, and like an impartial judge, delivers his or her verdict with equanimity and professional detachment.

Knowing your victims

Professional detachment? How's that possible in a country the size of Iceland? It might be easy for critics to lose themselves in the anonymity of the crowd in a metropolis the size of New York, London or Paris, but what about a city on the scale of Reykjavik where everyone knows each other, and no-one, least of all a critic, can pass unnoticed? How can they live in such close proximity to their victims and live to tell the tale? As soon as a reviewer has published his piece, he has every chance of

bumping into some of the people he has just written about the very next day on the street, in a café, or on a bus. He will live in perpetual fear of them crashing into his trolley in supermarkets or colliding with him under the shower in the local swimming pool. More suffocating still, the odds are that he probably already knows his victims. They could be anyone: a neighbour, a cousin, his dentist's nephew, a colleague's daughter...

So how then, one might wonder, do they survive? How do they sleep at night?

"Very well actually," according to one Icelandic film buff I was talking to (It wasn't me. Ed), "the movie critics at least."

"And how's that?" I ask.

"By writing lame reviews," he claims. "Icelandic critics are fine when they're reviewing foreign films," he says, "but when it comes to writing about our own output it's difficult to find someone who'll have the guts to say what he really thinks. They'll spend the first three quarters of the

review summarising the story and giving you a list of all the people involved, and then throw in a coy little paragraph at the end that always leaves you trying to figure out whether they actually liked it or not."

Is there more honesty in the theatre?

"And what about the theatre critics then?" I ask.

"They're probably more honest," he tells me, "because there's much more of a steady output there, but when it comes to movies, most Icelandic films will start with a minimum credit of three stars, before the critic has even put pen to paper, to celebrate the sheer miracle that the film ever got made. And it's understandable. Getting a movie off the ground is a mighty feat these days, particularly for a country like ours, so of course it deserves to be celebrated – but you can't help wishing we'd be a little bit more self-critical sometimes."

"You mean you don't like Icelandic movies?" I ask.

"On the contrary," he protests, "I



love Icelandic movies! And I want to see more of them, especially if they're as good as Dagur Kári's "Nói Albinói" last year. But not always leaves you trying to figure out and we should have the honesty to say so."

"Maybe what you need is a critic protection program on a par with the Witness Protection Program in the States," I suggest, "that way critics could write their pieces, and then get relocated to some other corner of Europe, where they would be given new identities and homes. They could even set up an exchange network that critics from other small nations might like to join: countries like Ireland, the Faeroes, Liechtenstein..."

Isn't there also a danger of going to the other extreme?" I add, "of being overly critical too?"

"Maybe," he says, "but that's something you're more likely to come across in casual conversations like this than in print."



The Civilised Way to Throw a Man to the floor

Every fan of a certain sport tries to convince those who know little or nothing about said sport that it takes a lot of smarts, finesse and critical thinking to play. Some examples have merit. Billiards takes a good understanding of the laws of dynamics, for example, and basketball requires more dexterity than some forms of gymnastics. On the other hand, hearing people describe boxing or football as a “science” is laughable. Sports seem to fall under one of two categories: strategic or brute. There might be a little bit of strategy in brute sports, or a little bit of physical roughness in strategic sports, but generally speaking, there’s the one and the other, and never the twain shall meet. Yet Icelandic wrestling – or “glíma” – turns this notion on its head; it has been and can be both brutal and strategic.

Beware the slaying stone

In settlement times glíma fell under two categories: “leikfang” or play wrestling and wrestling “in earnest,” the purpose of which was to get a man on the ground and kill him. Yet even leikfang had potential for harm. As it says in Jónsbók, a book of laws dating from 1325, “whosoever participates in the contest of friendly wrestling does so on his own responsibility.” This warning may have had something to do with the involvement of “the slaying slab.” This was a waist-high tapered stone stuck into the ground that a wrestler would try to bring his opponent to in order to throw him onto it and break his back or, for varieties sake, on occasion slam him belly-down on it and crush his ribcage.

Today’s glíma is, as Jón Birgir Valsson of the Icelandic Glíma Association (GLÍ) says, “a bit more civilised than that.” Insisting despite repeated questioning that they no longer use the slaying stone, he also made the well-worn argument that his sport takes a lot of strategy. As he spoke, I kept looking over at two men sparring. The rules require that each competitor keep both hands gripped to the leather handles of his opponent’s belt at all times. The object is to put your opponent down on the floor. Seems like a no-brainer, but then I noticed that these guys weren’t playing on a mat – they were throwing each other down, sometimes from shoulder height onto their backs, onto a hardwood floor. Yet when one of them hit the ground it was almost soundless.

“This is because a big part of the training is just learning how to hit the floor,” says Jón, “You have to learn how to relax your muscles effectively. Just

learning this much takes years. We’ve had judo champs or weightlifters walk in here and think they’re going to teach us how to glíma. They’re wrong every time.”

And grown men weep...

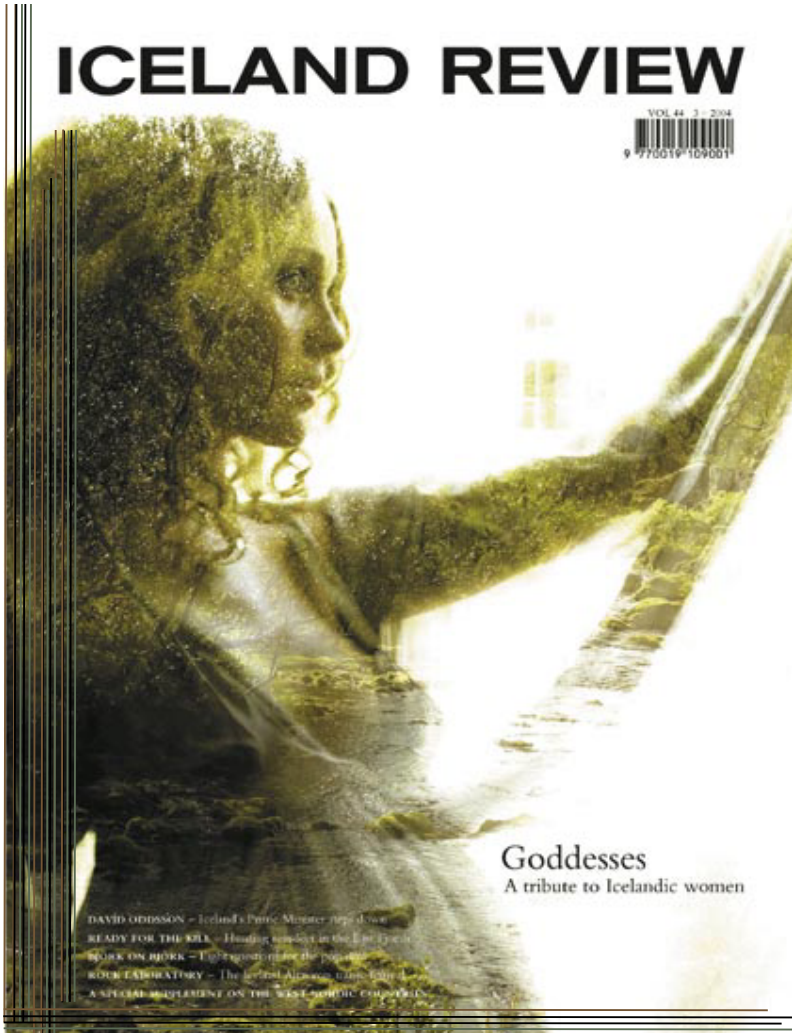
Glíma puts most of its emphasis on balance, knowing the proper way to shift one’s weight offensively and defensively, and the vast vocabulary of throws and counters takes many competitors a greater part of their lives to learn.

The competition structure itself is a combination of team sport and individual competition. Different glíma clubs compete with each other throughout the season (October to April) and when one club is victorious, the individual members of that club compete with each other. The most coveted prize of all in glíma – and perhaps in all Icelandic sports – is the “Grettisbelti,” a prize trophy created in 1906 by wrestlers from the HSP glíma club in Akureyri. So valued is this prize that, as Jón says, “I’ve seen grown men cry receiving it.”

The Icelandic Glíma Association is currently undergoing a project to bring the sport to other Scandinavian countries and has already gotten a foothold in Sweden, Denmark and Holland. The goal is to one day have pan-European competitions.

Jón says the sport has helped teach troubled youth the values of respect, discipline and fair play, adding, “It’s a difficult sport to play. I’ve been playing it for twenty years and I’m still learning. But once you get involved, it’s just too much fun to give up.”

ICELAND REVIEW



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Attacking the Very Thing You're Defending: An examination of the latter day lyrics of NICK CAVE

By Valur Gunnarsson

Abattoir Blues/The Lyre of Orpheus

"Get ready for love," is the first thing Nick Cave utters on his new album, promising not very great things to come. Cave the murder balladeer has been writing about love for the past decade on a string of albums with few peers in popular music.

On the masterful Let Love In, he concentrates on the conflict and heartbreak that so often comes with love, particularly on the title track: "Despair and deception/Love's ugly little twin/Came knocking on my door/I let them in" reminiscent of William Blake's "There is a smile of love and a smile of deceit/ And a smile of smiles where the two smiles meet." On the follow up, the breakthrough Murder Ballads, he steps back and makes fun of all he's said so far, taking obsessive love to its logical conclusion. Once the dust had settled in O'Malleys bar and Loretta was safely locked up, Cave came out with his saddest and yet most romantic album, The Boatman's Call, supposedly about his withdrawal from PJ Harvey and heroin. Moments of tenderness abound, from lying in bed with a loved one not reading the Sunday papers, to going to church thankful for another day. And then, inevitably, it all falls apart again, the dream cannot last, and it concludes with the singer saying: "Then leave me to my enemies dreams/ And be quiet as you are leaving, Miss."

A venom rarely heard in popular music

After the release of Boatman's Call, Nick Cave suggested that he might never make another album, as he had nothing more to say in song. Instead, he would grow tomatoes and write a book. But he still had one statement left to make. After a four year hiatus, his longest so far, he returned with No More Shall We Part, perhaps his greatest work. At first it sounded familiar, but once you start to peel the layers away you perhaps come closer to the black heart of Nick Cave than ever before. In the beautiful opening track, "As I Sat Sadly By Her Side," he sits with a girl who marvels at the wonders of the world, before correcting her by pointing out its horrors, reducing her to tears. Here, finally, was Nick Cave's ode to sorrow. Every step is laced with tragedy "I thought I'd take a walk today/ A mistake I sometimes make"

In that very song, "Oh My Lord," he tears at his audience ("They called at me through the fence/They weren't making any sense"), himself ("Someone cries what are you looking for/ I scream "the plot, the plot") and the notion of stardom ("The tears you are crying now/ Are just your answered prayers") with a venom rarely seen in popular music or, in fact, anywhere. And in the rubble of this deconstruction Nick Cave finally found true greatness. He had always been imitator rather than innovator. But he did imitate the best, and he did it very well. Now, finally, he was ready to take his place among the greats. But he did not remain there very long.

From a glimpse to blindness

After a couple of stunning concerts in Hótel Ísland, the bar was set higher than ever for all of us fortunate enough to be present. Still, one was willing to forgive him the opening track of his new album, "Wonderful Life." Everyone deserves a bit of happiness every now and then, even Nick Cave. But the remaining nine songs breeze by without bothering anyone were much, and are not even as effective as celebrations as his previous glimpses of joy.

For this was more than a glimpse. Nick Cave was happy now. He was newly married, the father of twins, and between the hours of nine and five he went to the office and wrote songs. He was not the first man to sacrifice his genius for happiness. His final reckoning with sadness on No More Shall We Part also seemed to be his final brush with greatness. Or was it?

Anyone can be forgiven a bad album every now and then. When news came out that Nick Cave was releasing a double album, expectations ran high he was making amends. Was the memory of Nocturama was to be erased by a twin masterpiece?

Songs with a happy ending

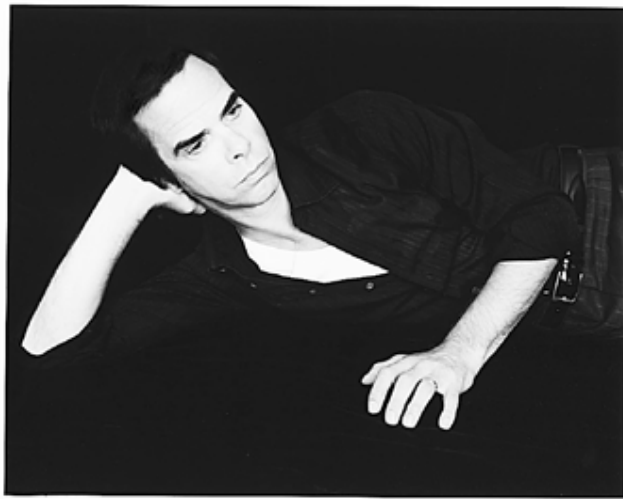
Some of the first indications were not good. Blixa Bargeld, who,

on his time off from Einstürzende Neubauten was a vital part of the Bad Seeds sound, departed, perhaps realising that his old master had nothing more to offer. And in an interview in Word Magazine, Cave said that his lead single "Nature Boy" was the type of song which would previously have been relegated to B-Side. When only three years earlier he could afford to throw away masterpieces such as "Grief Came Riding" on flip sides, now they were not only lead singles, "Nature Boy" sadly also manages to be the best song on the promisingly titled but ultimately disappointing Abattoir Blues.

Once he has gotten through telling us to get ready for love, Cave continues with "Most of all, nothing ever really happens." In his office in Brighton, you mean? Meanwhile, outside his window the world had indeed gone to war. Things do not get better with "Cannibal's Hymn" (another bloody title perhaps meant to disguise blandness), probably the most embarrassing thing he has yet committed to plastic. Before the first verse is through he's rhymed "unlock you" with "defrock you" and even trumping that with "rock you." It gets worse still in the chorus: "If you're gonna dine with them cannibals/ Sooner or later you're gonna get eaten." He then moves on to a Cohen quote, sitting like a bird on a fence before making a halfhearted apology to the listener with "I will...sing you songs with a happy ending/ Swoop down and tell you that it don't make much sense/ To attack the very thing you're defending." It is only on the third song, "Hiding All Away," that he makes a reference to the current events that recently inspired Tom Waits to make his best album in a decade. This he does in the form of another Cohen quote; "There is a war...coming."

The fine art of eloquent pornography

"Messiah Ward" includes the



chorus "bringing out the dead," the very same words that inspired the previously infallible Martin Scorsese to make his first bad film, and Cave does little better, waxing poetical with: "We could navigate our position by the stars/ But they've taken out the stars," before adding "The stars have all gone," in case you missed the point. "There She Goes, My Beautiful World," begins like an introduction to botany: "The wintergreen, the juniper/ the cornflower and the chicory" Nick Cave then utilises every trick available to the poet out of words, a female choir and an endless succession of name dropping from Johnny Thunders to Gaughin, and almost gets away with it.

He moves on to the suspiciously single-like single "Nature Boy." But at least he's trying here. The first verse, about a boy watching the horrors on the news, his father telling him not to look away but still to believe in the triumph of beauty, is kind of cute. And the second verse, when he discovers desire, reads like a prequel to "Let Love In." "You said hey nature boy, are you looking at me with some unrighteous intention.../I was having thoughts it was not in my best interest to mention." It is only in the third verse that he loses it, with "You played the patriot, raised the flag and I stood at full salute." Cave still has a lot to learn from Cohen on the art of being an eloquent pornographer. And the song also includes the second reference on the album to Sappho. Perhaps he's watching too much lesbian porn at the office?

God and splatter

The second album starts more promisingly, with a splatterfest version of the Orpheus myth. God gets a cameo, cruel as always, "a major player in heaven," and splatters Orpheus' brains all over the place. In his heyday, Cave would throw away better lines on a Batman

soundtrack "What about God and his Armageddon/ He's all blessed out up in heaven," the Lord not even caring enough to come back and destroy us all as he promised. But this, at least, is interesting. And Cave is having fun rather than singing about it, rhyming "pluck" with "f...oh my God" and "Orpheus" with "orifice." We here see some of the vindictive rage that has made Nick Cave one of the most interesting artists of the past 20 years. But by the second song, the single "Breathless" (wasn't that a Madonna song?) he's all blessed out again, singing about the birds and the bees. He's still on about birds in "Babe, You Turn Me On," a lesser cousin of "Babe, I Got You Bad" and the funny-once "Babe, I'm on Fire," before he gets pornographic again, putting "one hand on your round ripe heart/ And another down your panties," a bit more graphic than one might have hoped.

The business end of the gun is pointed in the singers direction in "Easy Money," about the trials and tribulations of having more money than most. Self indulgent, but amusing. One would hope this would lead to the same self examination that in the past yielded such wonderful works, but no, having gotten the guilt of the rich off his chest, he goes on about how happy he is. And on and on and on. Yes, love can surely feel supernatural and like a spell, but the tragedy here is that Nick Cave seems to have very little left to say on the subject.

Nick Cave has often said that he likes the latterday works of past masters, to see them past their prime. It's his turn now. And it is a testament to his great talent that even at his worst he still manages to be more interesting than most. Still, with a bland single album and then a bland double to follow, one worries that his days as a creative artist may be over. But my god what a run he had.



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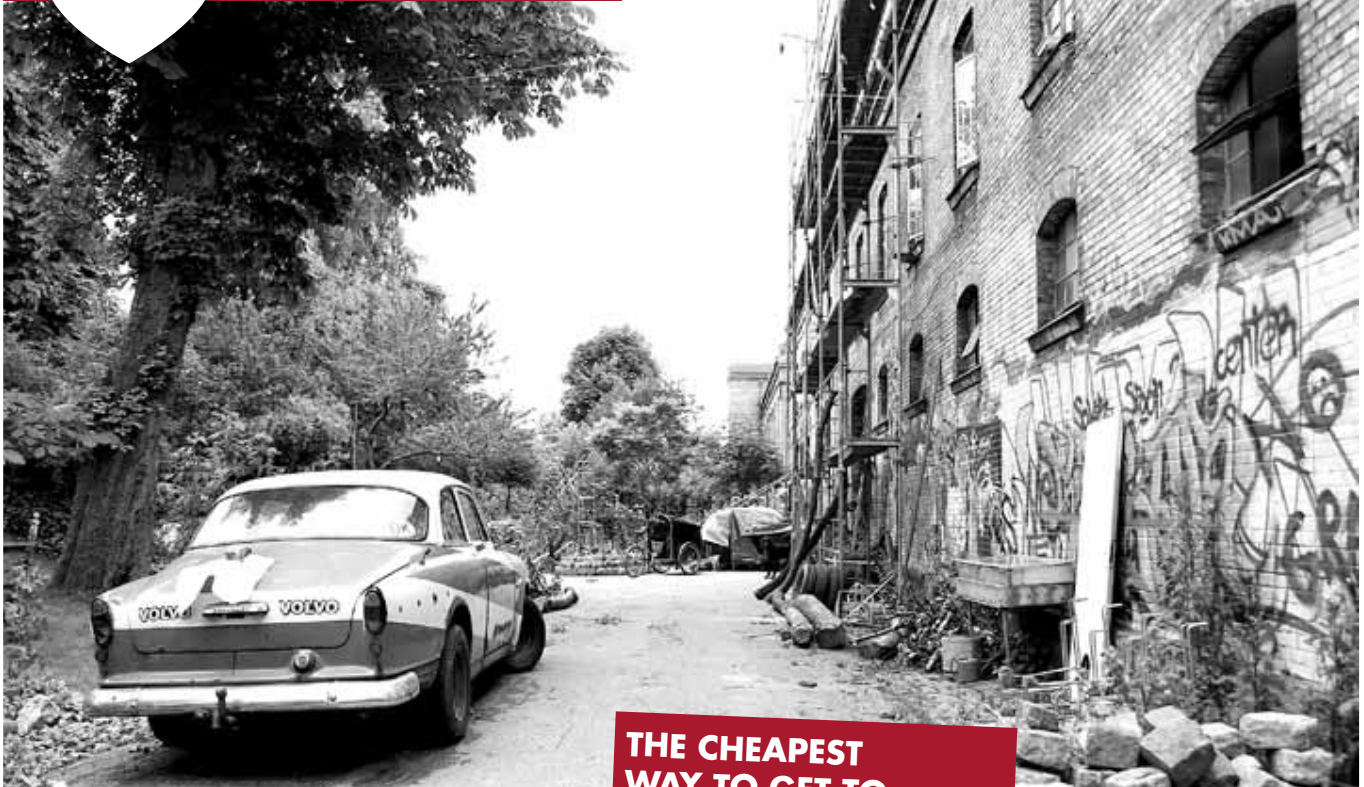
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COPENHAGEN

Denmark

COPENHAGEN FOR THE
DESPERATELY POOR

by Paul F Nikolov

"This neighbourhood used to be called 'Sbit Island', Laust and Sara tell me. They are a Danish couple I am intrusively asking for directions in the Copenhagen neighbourhood of Amager, and I can't help but feel even more encouraged to be here.

The reason behind the name goes back to the late 19th century. At that time, Amager served as Copenhagen's landfill. Today, it appears to be a standard urban scene – video stores, take aways, bars, cafés and restaurants lining either side of the main boulevard, Amagerbrogade, as six levels of apartments loom overhead. But turn right or left off of the boulevard and the neighbourhood turns into a quiet suburban setting of green lawns and cottage-like houses that seems a million miles away from the city. Like many things in Copenhagen, there's a lot more to it than meets the eye.

You've seen the Little Mermaid statue, done the Tivoli, "visited" Christiania and think that Copenhagen is therefore pretty much a done deal. Yet outside of the city center there remain endless possibilities.

For example, one Saturday night I felt like doing something different but I didn't have a lot of money. I'd never been to this town before so my wife and I threw caution to the wind, hopped on the bus and headed uptown. Once the bus got onto

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Do not drink and cycle!
Don't cross the street at a red light, there may be no cars but the fine is huge.

photos: Trausti



Frederiksborggade, I watched the language of the restaurant windows changing. First they were only in Danish. After a while they became Danish and Arabic, then Arabic and Danish. Sorely missing a multicultural environment of late as a resident of Reykjavik, I stayed on the bus until I saw nothing but Arabic. This is where I decided to get off. After loading up on some fast, cheap and superb Middle Eastern cuisine, we made our way south. Danish goth kids laughed at trendy clubbers and Arab women regarded both with bemusement. A group of trick-or-treaters pulling a wagon which carried a boom box playing Tom Waits walked passed us and as they did, two very unscary witches reversed the traditional trick-or-treater role and offered us candy. We took at as a good omen and we were right. Frederiksborggade offers a wide array of bars, clubs and cafés to choose from – a variety we were more than happy to take advantage of.

The next morning, hungover, nearly broke, and in desperate need of quiet and fresh air, the answer to all those problems lay not too far to the north along the coast: a park called Jægersborg

Dyrehaven. I took the bus which, despite my understanding of the laws of physics, I could have sworn was moving backwards through time. The stainless steel and glass of the city center gave way to the brick houses and lawns, which then morphed into thatched roof cottages. Once the bus reached the end of the line, I found exactly what I was looking for: trees, and lots of them. Free of charge.

The grounds themselves are nearly half the size of Copenhagen. I spent all afternoon wandering around in the dense woods and sprawling fields before I reached a clearing where, somehow very appropriately, a 17th century mansion stood. Herds of deer walked impassively by, although maybe they were just trying to act nonchalant – the park was and still is the hunting ground of the royals. I stepped out of the clearing, walked off the well-worn path and within a minute, I was in the middle of a dense forest again. I stood there for a few moments, taking in the autumn air, simply happy to be where I was. If only it could last.

COPENHAGEN Picks

Compiled by Paul F Nikolov

SO YOU WANT TO SEE ANOTHER COPENHAGEN? THINGS TO DO IN COPENHAGEN FOR THE TRAVELLER WHO'S DONE IT ALL:

VIKINGLANDSBYEN

Located about thirty minutes west of Copenhagen, Vikinglandsbyen is an authentic Viking village in every possible way. Built with Viking Era materials, tools, and craftsmanship, the village is always changing and expanding. Easily accessible by taking either the 143 or 154E bus to Risby, where the village is located.

JÆGERSBORG DYREHAVEN

The aforementioned park was built in 1669 for the Danish royal family to hunt deer, boar and other unsuspecting creatures. Today you can tour the royal mansion, feed the deer, enjoy some "brændte mandler" (hot sugar-coated almonds) or just unwind in the woods. Simply take the 5A bus to Klampenborg Station and you're there.

BARSTARTEN

Kapelvej 1 København N +45 35 24 11 00

If what you're in the mood for are cheap drinks and good music being spun on two turntables throughout the night, then this is the place for you.

CAFE DOLCE VITA

Amagerbrogade 102 København S +45 32 55 35 00

Located in Amager, Dolce Vita is an oasis in the midst of take aways. A fine Italian restaurant without the fine restaurant prices.

SOMMERLYST

Dyrehavsbakken Klampenborg +45 39 64 58 44

A quaint Danish pub with lots of history and a fiercely loyal following by regulars who will be more than happy to share said history with you at the drop of a hat. An often (and unfairly) ignored slice of the older Denmark.

TOP
8

MOVIES

by **Börkur Gunnarsson**



Children of Nature by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson
Just such a beautiful film. Beautifully shot, written and acted (except the scene with his kid who already has a family of her own). Though the end scene always bugged me as too much of a postmodern thing for the film, it couldn't destroy this celebration of the small things in life. It is rare

Börkur has been living abroad for most of the past decade, in Germany, Sweden, Denmark and for the past five years in the Czech Republic. There he has been studying film-making. His first feature film, Bitter Coffee, is currently on release in Iceland.

to see an almost flawless film with a couple of marvellous scenes in between (for example the buying of shoes for teenagers for before a trip). **Wallpaper** by Júlíus Kemp
A naive film, with characters that you have seen a thousand times before. But the thing was that at the time they had never been translated into Icelandic reality. I didn't like it at the time but now I think it is a charming movie and a daring move. **Nói albinói** by Dagur Kári
It's a good drama, with a story that has been told a thousand times before, but it has this little extra thing everywhere. It's funny, beautiful, nice, tragic, well acted, well shot and an amazing first full feature from the director.

TSp

1. Children of Nature by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson
2. Wallpaper by Júlíus Kemp
3. Nói albinói by Dagur Kári
4. Skytturnar by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson.
5. Nýtt líf by Práinn Bertelsson
6. Hrafninn flýgur by Hrafn Gunnlaugsson
7. Með allt á hreinu by Ágúst Guðmundsson
8. Hlemmur by Ólafur Sveinsson

Skytturnar by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson
The best outcome of the Friðriksson & Kárason collaborations. A well built story, basic cinematography and the theme touched on some interesting questions about man's habit of killing. **Nýtt líf** by Práinn Bertelsson
Finally Icelanders could laugh at an Icelandic film intentionally. I remember laughing like hell through the film but being a bit ashamed after it when an elder girl who was in my group said it was stupid. I went alone to the sequel and laughed even more. **Hrafninn flýgur** by Hrafn Gunnlaugsson
It is one of the great pities of Icelandic cinema that after this film,

Gunnlaugsson, a talented young director, focused all his talent on playing a great director instead of being one. Even if only because of this film, his contribution to Icelandic cinematography was one of importance. **Með allt á hreinu** by Ágúst Guðmundsson
When I was young, your intelligence was measured by how much you could quote from this film. I still tend to measure intelligence from that same point of view. **Hlemmur** by Ólafur Sveinsson
The tragedy and the dirt becomes so beautiful here. Though the film and the method is unethical it's just too good of a piece to worry.

TOP
8

ALBUMS

by **Gísli Már Sigurjónsson**



The Sugarcubes: Life's Too Good

The only time I've ever waited outside a record shop before its opening. I gained a copy of a record whose overly optimistic title actually lived up to its name. Now while I still spend quality time with this piece I remember the weird time they had with the Icelandic press/media due to their surprising and sudden UK attention. It was an embarrassing time. They also switched the rule regarding where the openings are on the vinyl package, as in this case you take the album out of the cover on the top rather than the side. This one is to be deeply cherished. Not only is life too good, it sounds beautiful too. Contains: Its contents in their entirety. See also: Ham-Hold.

Gísli started his musical career as a guitarist in various garage bands in Hafnarfjörður. He went on to play guitar in the Metal band IIIX. In the fall of 1999 he joined the band Stjórnukísi and played on the album Góðar stundir. He currently runs the studio Vöðurstofan with his bandmates, and is a member of the band Bacon, currently releasing their debut album. He also stepped in for deceased guitarist Fróði in the band SSSpan at a concert in Fróði's honour. During the day he draws 3-D graphics for the company ONO. He is also a dead ringer for Brad Pitt, although this is not readily apparent from looking at his photos nor looking at him in the flesh.

TSp

1. The Sugarcubes: *Life's Too Good*
2. Rauðir fletir: *Ljónaskógar*. Due to this records' complete disappearance from every media/market known to man, I remember only one song from this 4 song ep; Þögn af plötu, which I listened to alarmingly often. It is also one of the first songs I proudly learnt by myself on guitar. I still remember it and can play it completely although I haven't heard it for 12 years because my copy got stolen. Contains: Three other songs. See also: Risaeölan - Efta!
3. Kanada: *Kanada*. A colourful beautifully sounding record of ...songs. Whether it's pop or avant-pop or something else I'll leave up to someone else to decide. With top-talent on every instrument, it remains (main songwriter, drummer, producer) Óli Björn's reddest rose. Contains: Colors and songs. See also: Trabant - Moment of Truth.
4. Graveslime: *Roughness and Toughness*. Graveslime's only output lives up to its name. Contains: One of the best visual artworks ever. See also: I adapt - Why not make today legendary.
5. Reptilicus: *Crusher of Bones*. With a variety of contributors, this release remains a favorite. Contains: Pirate Paradise (and Godkrist). See also: 2001 - Fryggð.
6. Bjartmar Guðlaugsson: *Ljóð til vara*. For the sole reason of containing Afi, one of the best songs ever. Written by Björgvin Gíslason, lyrics by Bjartmar and vocals by Björk Guðmundsdóttir. Hard to talk about, has to be heard. Contains: The aforementioned Afi. See also: Hrekkjúsín - Lög unga fólksins.
7. XIII/Thirteen: *Salt*. Again, an album containing songs. Play loud. Contains: The song that is Zoot. See also: Thirteen/XIII - Magnifico Nova.
8. Skúli Sverrisson/Antony Burr: *Desist*. The audio equivalent of going to the dentist. Contains/Requires: Your complete and utter attention. See also: David Lynch's Eraserhead.

TOP
8

BOOKS

by **Einar Kárason**



Einar Kárason graduated from the University of Iceland with a BA in literature in 1978. At the same time, his poems started appearing in the local papers. His first novel, Þetta eru asnar, Guðjón, came out in 1981. Two years later Devil's Island, the first in a trilogy of books about the poor in post war Iceland, came out. It has since been turned into both a hit play and a movie. His latest work, Hvar frómur flekist-Ferðasögur, is out now on Edda.

TSp

1. Egils saga by Snorri Sturluson
2. The Good Soldier Svejk, by Jaroslav Hasek. The funniest war-tale ever written.
3. The Devils, by Fyodor Dostoevsky. His greatest masterpiece.
4. Berlin-Alexanderplatz, by Alfred Döblin.
5. Mort á crédit, by Louis Ferdinand Céline.
6. Catch 22, by Joseph Heller. The second funniest war-tale ever written.
7. A Confederacy of Dunces, by John Kennedy Toole.
8. Sturlunga-saga, by Sturla Þórðarson.

Egils saga Skallagrímssonar by Snorri Sturluson, written in the 13th century. About three generations of male-heroes. The oldest, Kveld-Úlfur is a Norwegian farmer and a lunatic (his name means "Night-Wolf"). His son is Skalla-Grímur ("Bald-Grim"), one of Iceland's first settlers who, after failing to kill his seven-years old son Egill when losing against him in a ball-game, kills his nanny instead. But most of all the book is about Egill, who is a vicious viking, a cold blooded killer and also mean and greedy. But at the same time he is a loving father, a family-man, and a sentimental poet. A Tony Soprano of times past. This book can also be found in English.

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"We came under a lot of criticism from Arab governments for reporting on events the way they were."

Ahmed al-Shaikh,
editor-in-Chief of
Al-Jazeera, **PAGE 6**

"In Reykjavik, AA-meetings are so frequent that it is possible to spend the entire day going from one meeting to another."

Klemes Prastarson
examines alcoholism,
PAGE 12

"In the brief time I had spent in Iceland, I got the impression that it was a quasi-socialist paradise"

Paul Fontaine Nikolov,
PAGE 16

"There simply has to be a song in the world called 'Brad Pitt'"

Einar Örn on his
bandmate, **PAGE 29**

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